HOW TO SEE MODERN PICTURES

American Museum of Natural History

FIG. 1
NORTHWEST INDIAN CARVING

HOW TO SEE MODERN PICTURES

AN EXTENSION OF THE DESIGN PRINCIPLE INTO THREE DIMENSIONS
AND AN EXPLANATION OF ITS BASIC APPLICATION TO THE WORK
OF THE MODERNS, THE PRIMITIVES, AND THE CLASSICS
OF BOTH EUROPE AND THE ORIENT, TOGETHER
WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING PRACTICAL
SUGGESTIONS FOR BRIDGING THE GAP
BETWEEN ARTIST AND PUBLIC

by

RALPH M. PEARSON

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To My Wife, L. H. P.

PREFACE

Though this book is written for laymen in general, it might almost be said to have been written for one particular group of laymen—the members of the art departments of the women's clubs of the country, for it is they that I have had continually in mind as being the one cross-section of the American public which reveals the largest vein of the will to know in matters of art. It is they who organize study classes, read books, arrange and attend lectures, invite exhibitions, buy, and urge the sale of contemporary art. It is they who put pressure on commercial dealers, through their buying power, to obtain better art merchandise, and above all in importance, it is they who, in many states, are putting exhibitions of art into the schools, which means into the lives of the children. These educational activities make them the logical agency of communication between laymen and artist—between the great floundering public and

works of art. They give hope where there might be despair. If Occidental society climbs out of the present near dark age of art appreciation, the women's club art departments, in America at least, will deserve credit for a major share of fruitful effort toward that result. Art associations fall in line, of course, as related agencies, but they are much fewer in number, and more often than not are headed by club women. Art museums contribute enormously to educational results (more in some cases, unfortunately, by the silent teaching of their exhibits, than by the spoken teaching of their "docents") but, among laymen, it is the woman's club that largely uses the museum. No matter how many mistakes they make, no matter if half their teaching and study is still following discredited Ruskinian formulas, no matter if artists do rail at them for their "pink teas" and interest in personalities, the fact remains that they are *trying to find out* and this one fact makes them significant factors in contemporary life, and the great hope for an eventual public comprehension of contemporary art.

Preface

In fifteen years of contacts with women's clubs as an exhibiting etcher, I have learned something of their problems, sensed their general sincerity, and come to respect them for what progress they have made and are making. These pages are an attempt to make available an approach to pictorial art which, once understood, will, at the very least, give the individual a foundation on which to stand, and the right to begin to have confidence in his own esthetic judgments. I hope it will prove useful to the women's clubs.

For preparing the ground for the change in the approach to pictures which must become general within our lifetime unless all signs fail, probably no one deserves greater credit than the late Arthur Dow and the art supervisors and teachers trained by him. These pioneers have substituted the design approach for the hitherto universal imitative approach to drawing in the public schools of the country. The importance of this teaching can hardly be overestimated and signs that it has been fruitful are evident in many directions—for instance in the more spontane-

ously creative work shown in present day school exhibits, in many applied design activities that have come to be part of most school programs, and in a quicker grasping of the design element in modern art by school children than by adults. Indeed the contribution of these public school art teachings, in the Dow manner, and of those art schools and colleges which have given a place to the same approach, is the yeast which is now at work among the youth of the country that will make it possible for them to *see* and *feel* modern (and ancient) art provided the growth is not checked, or destroyed, on their emergence from school, by the adult negativism so prevalent today among art "authorities" and "appreciators." The modern approach herein described is a carrying further of the two dimensional approach which Dow derived and made available from oriental art. It is to be hoped that the eager youth will have the chance to add it to their present equipment and thus fit themselves more thoroughly for those sensitive individual art judgments which will so enrich

their own experience, and which are so sadly needed in all public art affairs.

Artists who are satisfied with their inheritance of suggestive representation are resisting the modern approach, or damning it bodily in a sort of blind self-defence. That their resistance and condemnation is instinctive and unthinking rather than rational is evidenced, I think, by the fact that there is not one iota of modern theory which they can logically denounce if they really grasp the significance of the classic art which they value so highly. If such will only turn their backs on the one concept of imitation, then there is not a single statement in this book which the balance of their art inheritance will allow them to deny. Artists who are dissatisfied with representation, on the other hand, but who have not yet assimilated the modern theory and are searching for the secret of the new vitality which they sense in modern work, can only be helped by such a laying open of basic principles as is here attempted.

I have considerable confidence that the standard here presented, because it deals with uni-

versal qualities in works of art and therefore has universal applications, will be of permanent value. I also believe that it is available to laymen—that the prevailing confusion in the minds of laymen is needless. Experience supports that belief in many cases with which I have come in contact. If a few can understand, many can understand. And because on laymen chiefly rests the responsibility for their own growth of understanding it would seem to follow that the providing of tools and the blazing of trails for them is a decidedly important matter.

I wish to acknowledge indebtedness for assistance in my own development from a rather hazy emotional reaction to modern principles to a somewhat vivid connection with them, to the courageous "wild beasts" of France (Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse and the Cubists), to those clear thinkers on the subject, Clive Bell and Roger Fry, to the Modern Art School of New York, to Paul Burlin, to the Indians of the Southwest, to the Aztecs and Mayans, and to Jay Hambidge. For the loan of photographs I wish to express my thanks to *The Arts Magazine,* to

the American Museum of Natural History, to the Bourgeois, Weyhe, Montross, and Denks (formerly Hanfstaengl) Galleries, to the individual artists herein represented, and to my wife L. H. P. for her unfailing interest, assistance and constructive criticism.

R. M. P.

Elverhoj Colony
Milton-on-Hudson
N. Y.
August 6, 1924

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	v
I	THE NEW APPROACH TO PICTURES	3
II	APPLIED AND PICTORIAL DESIGN	13
III	VISION	29
IV	RELATION OF LINES, SHAPES AND FORMS IN PICTURES	43
V	STATIC AND DYNAMIC SYMMETRY AND THE DIAGONAL	64
VI	THE SOMETHING PLUS IN A WORK OF ART	86
VII	REPRESENTATION	95
VIII	CLASSICISM	120
IX	CRITICISM AND THE STANDARD	130
X	CONCLUSION	143
	APPENDIX:	
	Books to Read	157
	Magazines Showing Contemporary Creative Art	159
	Some Study Suggestions	164
	Beauty and Art	168
	Official Art	171
	On Buying Pictures	174
	The Art Dealer	181
	The Interior Decorator	190
	Pictures in the Home	197

Contents

	PAGE
Art in the Schools	201
Art and the "Movies"	204
Art and Advertising	213
The Artist and the Public	215
Buying Power	221
Conclusion	224

ILLUSTRATIONS

Northwest Indian Carving . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

Paleolithic Cave Painting 4

Ancient Mexico 4

Assyrian 5

African Negro 12

Applied Design. Northwest Coast Indians . . . 13

Examples wherein the Sensitive Line, Space, and Texture Relations of Applied Design have been carried over into Three Dimensional Pictorial Design 23

An Etching by Hopfer 26

Three Dimensional Design 27

Two Dimensional Design 27

Hopi Indian 29

A picture in which Cypress Trees have been reduced to their Simplest Elements and Woven into Design 30

An Early American Work by an Unknown Artist . 31

Andrew Dasburg 60

Henry McFee 60

Greek Vase about 450 B. C. 61

Jules Breton 74

Sistine Madonna, Raphael 75

By Toyokuni 84

Illustrations

PAGE

Charles Sheeler 112
Judson D. Smith 113
A Partial Abstraction by Walter Ufer 116
An Etching by the Author 117
Brancusi 118
Bruno Krauskopf 119
Adolf Riedlin 119
Matisse 119
Eric J. Smith 119
A Complete Abstraction by Lyonel Feininger . . 124
A Cubist Complete Abstraction by Picasso . . . 125
Maurice Sterne 128
Georges Seurat 129
Daumier 130
Joseph Bernard 131
Examples in which Design has been imposed on Nature without Distortion 132
Mediæval East Indian 133
Renoir 140
After Raphael 142
The Only Example of a Display "ad" that was the work of an artist found during two months of observation in New York City 214

HOW TO SEE MODERN PICTURES

CHAPTER I

THE NEW APPROACH TO PICTURES

THE modern movement in visual art offers, to-day, a new approach to pictures.[1] This new approach, in turn, offers to those who care to understand it, an important extension of experience, an increased capacity for appreciation, a different and more vital type of comprehension. It holds the capacity to do these things largely because it includes the past as well as the present in the widened sweep of its horizon, reëstablishing thereby numerous broken points of contact whose very existence had been forgotten in many quarters. The movement itself leans heavily on the past—is, in fact, such a marked going back to old standards that it could be called reactionary

[1] Since this inquiry will be confined chiefly to the field of pictures, that limitation will hereafter be assumed when the modern movement is mentioned. Sculpture may be included under pictures since, in a sense, it presents pictures to be looked at from all sides instead of one.

with more justice than is displayed when it is miscalled revolutionary. The new approach, therefore, must also be a return to a former type of approach. But to see it thus, a wide angle vision is needed, for the time gap to be spanned is certainly a good three hundred years—back to the days of Rembrandt or before. If the vision be narrower than that, if the approach to pictures be compared to the generally accepted approach of our own immediate past, the break is so radical that it can only be called revolutionary. But whatever its character or history may be, the important fact remains that just as the movement itself is a release for the artist into a wider experience, so, also, is the approach a release for the observer of works of art into wider experience. This quality alone makes exploration worth while for all those who prefer spiritual adventure to the comfort of spiritual stagnation. Let it be the reason for the present voyage of discovery and investigation.

The new approach is visual in character. It demands that pictures be seen as ends in themselves. It demands that a distinction be made

FIG. 2

PALEOLITHIC CAVE PAINTING
One of the Earliest Known Pictures.

American Museum of Natural History.

FIG. 3

ANCIENT MEXICO

This and figures 2, 4 and 5 are pictures from widely diverse civilizations and ages in which highly developed design is inherent.

FIG. 4
ASSYRIAN

between qualities in a picture whose only purpose it is to be seen, and qualities whose purpose it is to convey ideas or human emotions. It calls for the development of the sense of sight—the power of pure vision.[2] These demands will be emphasized continually as our journey proceeds.

But at the very outset, in order to eliminate needless antagonism, one point must be made clear. Just as visual qualities need not be the only ingredients of pictures, so the visual approach to works of art need not be the only approach. To segregate the visual from the literary and the human emotional approaches, is to segregate resulting experience from all practical entanglements. And this is exactly what should be done in order to better attain the main purpose of making the visual approach available to individuals for whom it is now sealed, double-locked,

[2] The term "pure vision" is not used in a scientific sense, for in such a sense there is, of course, no such thing. The human organism may respond to a great number of stimuli, which come to it through the sense of sight. "Pure vision" is here used to indicate that type of vision which results in a response to the purely visual aspect of things, as distinct from the response stimulated by various associated thoughts, ideas, etc.

and covered with cob-webs. We do not see pictures, we think about them. For every one person who sees the lines, forms, and spaces, in a picture as *ends,* there are multitudes who see around them or through them to related *ideas.* Within the former experience of pure vision lies our only opportunity for knowing that crystalline form of esthetic emotion which is above and distinct from all human associations. The allurements of this pure experience of the ether above the mountain top are many, but so, too, are the allurements of the warm-blooded human experiences of the valley. The interweavings of art with life may not be denied. No choice need be forced. But here is emphasized a way which has been largely forgotten—a way which the modern movement of the day has rediscovered and laid open for those to travel who will.

Henry E. Krehbiel in his *How to Listen to Music,*[3] says "A tone becomes musical material only by association with other tones." *Similarly, a line becomes art material only by association with other lines.*

[3] Scribners, 1897.

"Musical tones are related to each other in respect of time or pitch." *Art lines (or forms or colors) are related to each other in relation of space, movement, tonality, etc.*

"So far as music is merely agreeably coördinated sounds it may be reduced to mathematics and its practice to handicraft. But recognition of design is a condition precedent to the awakening of the fancy or the imagination."

So far as art is merely representative of nature, it may be reduced to imitation and its practice to handicraft. Recognition of DESIGN is a condition precedent to the awakening of esthetic emotion.

There is clearly an analogy. The modern movement has rediscovered the importance of design—the importance of the *relations* of lines, forms, colors, and spaces to each other and to the picture as a whole. Indeed it has discovered that this quality of design is one of the most essential qualities which determines a work of art —that without it the making of pictures may be "reduced to imitation and to handicraft." It is the recognition of design in a broadened meaning

of the word that may be said to be one of the basic principles of the modern movement.

Design, however, has been a basic quality in pictorial expression through countless centuries of human life. One sensitive to it is rewarded, in the briefest survey, by a thrilling discovery of its presence almost wherever he looks. Twenty thousand years ago, in the very dawn of known art, he finds it in certain of the paleolithic cave paintings. Coming to our own generation he finds it in the pottery of the Hopi Indians. Then a thousand years back he sees it in those masterpieces—the Aztec and Mayan reliefs, and, half around the world, in the equally marvelous carvings of Indo-China. He finds it in the decorations of Assyria, Crete, Egypt, Babylonia, China and Japan, in the supreme arts of Greece, in the recent totem-poles of the Alaska Indians, in Byzantine mosaics, marking its rebirth after the Roman debâcle, in carvings by African Negroes, in Persian paintings and textiles, in the masterpieces of Europe from the Twelfth to the Seventeenth Centuries, and in occasional work after that up to the true work of the modern movement

of to-day. In all ages, in all places, he finds this same basic organization of elements built into the expression of the artist. A brief survey indicates its universality; a closer study proves it—with one exception. In work which copies nature—the so called representative work—it dies out and disappears.

Works of art from all the civilizations mentioned and many others, are preserved in our museums and are highly valued by society to-day. Archeologists give incalculable service in discovering, deciphering and cataloguing them. Institutions and private collectors, by purchase and gift, perform a great service in making them available to all in sumptuous buildings that are a fitting tribute to the great worth of what they contain. Historians and writers discuss them and interpret them and the great public gazes with awe and wondering reverence. But in all this appreciative activity, in all the discussion by learned authorities, in all the interpretative writings of historians and critics, in the mute teachings of museums through printed labels, in the lectures of museum docents, and of school

teachers to touring students—in all the appreciation now bestowed on the art treasures of bygone ages, an overwhelming emphasis is given to consideration of facts and ideas relating to the works, an almost negligible amount of consideration to those visual qualities, the passionately apprehended space relations, which chiefly determine the art value of pictorial expression.

It is true that design is often mentioned in connection with such works, but, in a discussion of a Leonardo's *Last Supper*, there will be two pages about significance of subject matter to one sentence about significance of design. The emphasis is placed on matters of technic, or representation of life or of nature, on the story, on the deliniation of character or emotion, or whatnot, rarely on the crucible in which the artist has fused these various elements into a work of art—the crucible of design. Even though it may be said that design is taken for granted, the fact remains that the cumulative effect of such neglect is to lose for design the consideration which it deserves. The modern movement provides the opportunity to re-

store the balance, to vibrate to a forgotten chord, to *see* the thing which *is* art and has been art for twenty thousand years.

It should be then, a worth while aim to arrive at some comprehension of this strange, important quality called design, by excavating it, so to speak, from the accumulated mass of extraneous ideas under which it has become buried, and to apply such comprehension with great particularity in our study of pictures in order that we may gain the richest experience possible from them. Comprehension of design, along with comprehension of other qualities with which we are, perhaps, more familiar, means the attainment of discrimination. Discrimination means awareness, certainly a desirable state of being. The modern movement has opened a long-closed door. An open door invites entrance and exploration.[4]

[4] The following are fair examples of side-issue criticism. This from *Art and Archæology*. "Few are the people who see in a rag-picker anything suggestive of beauty. Mr.—— has, however, produced a figure that grips one. What a tale of object poverty it tells, a tale that cannot fail to touch the heart, and bring a clutching sensation to the throat. Everyone of these works tells a tale or preaches a sermon. They fearlessly typify those social forces and ideals which are the very root of society."

And this sent to *The Arts* by a contributor signed B. P.:

"We were rude enough to follow a 'docent' as she was called, while she led a group of school children through a certain small city museum not long ago.

"From picture to picture they went.

" 'Now children this painting is by Tryon. What is he famous for?' No answer. 'The name of an animal,' prompted the sweet docent. 'Horses,' said one little boy. 'Cows,' said another. 'That is right,' said the docent. 'Cows, Tryon, Tryon, cows.' 'Now next week I shall see which of you remembers best. And this is a particularly interesting Tryon because it has no cows.' At this there was a slight rumbling while Tryon took the opportunity to turn over in his grave.

"The next painting was called The Monarch of the Forest.

" 'Now children what does the monarch of the forest mean?'

" 'That's the big tree in the middle,' came in chorus.

" 'You all know that, don't you,' smiled the docent, 'but you mustn't forget the little trees also. The forest has little monarchs as well as big monarchs.'

"In the foreground of the next masterpiece examined by the class were several domestic animals.

"Each one in turn was named by the bright little children. And to put the final proof of their profundity the dear docent said:

" 'And what noise does the pig make?'

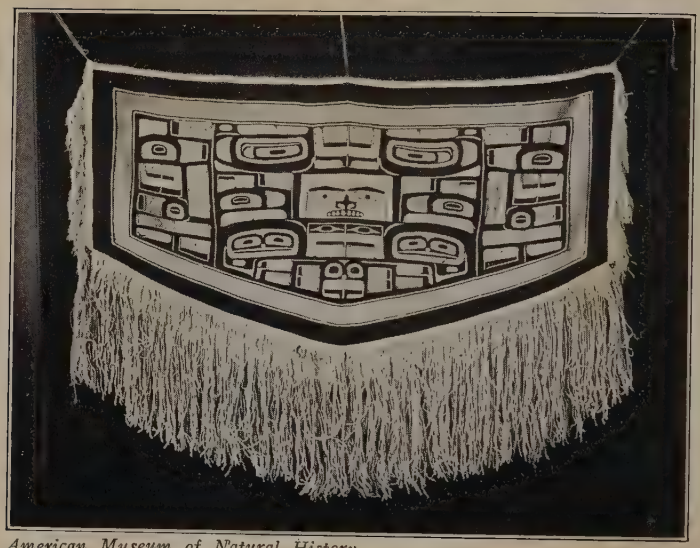
" 'Umpf-umpf-umpf,' came in crescendo.

" 'Sh, sh, sh,' admonished teacher, laughing. 'Not too much noise in the art gallery.'

" 'Our hour is up now,' said the kindly lady, and merrily the children ran after teacher to the door of the museum."—B. P.

The Arts

Fig. 5
AFRICAN NEGRO



American Museum of Natural History

FIG. 6

APPLIED DESIGN. NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS

FIG. 7

CHAPTER II

APPLIED AND PICTORIAL DESIGN

THE modern movement in visual art (called Post-Impressionism) is a *return to style* —to a consideration of the *how it is done.* It might be defined as *pictorial expression of the felt nature of things built upon a passionate apprehension of line, space, texture, and color relations.* The word *design* is used in these pages as a compact label for these factors and must be understood to include all of them. This use extends its meaning beyond the limits associated with the word as used in applied design. The word itself when used in either the applied or pictorial field means more than is indicated by the term *composition.* Composition means the arranging, in a picture, of objects which are portrayed essentially as they exist in nature, whereas design includes the arranging or composing of objects which are transformed or conventionalized

to meet its needs. Arthur Dow in his *Composition* [1] recognizes this larger meaning by saying he would prefer the word Design for the title of his book were it not for its associations with utilitarian application. But what does this definition of the modern movement mean in actual practice? How is it possible to progress from a more or less hazy comprehension of the dictionary meaning of its constituent words to a visual comprehension of its significance in pictures? To answer this it will be necessary to consider first what happens in ordinary, or applied, design, and then to compare such results with the happenings in pictorial design.

Fig. 7 is an example of ordinary applied design, its subject a vine in flower. A vine in nature is made up of stem, leaves, flowers, and

[1] Doubleday Page & Co. N. Y. 1916. Mr. Arthur Dow deserves great credit for his adaptation of the Oriental principles of design into his teachings so long before they were absorbed by Western artists or art schools. His influence on millions of children of grade and high schools through a method of teaching art which is built on the design approach, must have helped tremendously to free those children from the *imitation* thought-grooves, and, by so doing, prepare them for an understanding of the new art of their day. The value of such preparation hardly can be overestimated.

tendrils. Each of these parts, considered as a separate entity, is highly organized, or arranged, by nature. Nothing in a perfect flower, for instance, is accidental or superflous. The organization meets the functional needs of the flower as a living organism and at the same time arranges the various parts into an orderly pattern of great beauty. But—and this is the important point—as soon as one leaves the single unit in nature and looks at groupings of units, organization into pattern begins to disappear. In a simple, rigid plant like a geranium it is maintained to a large extent, but, as complexity of parts increase, orderly pattern changes into jumbled confusion. The ensemble of a wild grape-vine, for instance, while it maintains perfect functional organization, is a tangle of accidental and insignificant visual relations, which display a total lack of any pattern organization. The whole of nature is evidence of this condition. A forest or weed-patch, a mountain range or a pack of wolves, all spell visual confusion. The accidental or occasional exception certainly does not disprove this rule. But where nature stops

the artist begins. When a designer wishes to use a vine as a motif for the decoration of a book cover, as in fig. 7, he begins at once to improve on nature. He studies the various parts carefully. He thinks of them as an assortment of raw materials out of which he is to create pattern (a picture). He changes or conventionalizes them to suit his needs. He reduces them to two dimensions, length and breadth, that they may take their places on the flat plane of the paper. He gives sensitive consideration to their proportions one to the other, and to their lines, textures, and colors, and to their spacing within set borders. He finds that ordered repetition pleases the eye and therefore repeats identical motives. In other words he creates a design by processes which may be summed up as follows:

DESIGN (in its ordinary meaning, and usually called applied design, because of its application to decorative purposes):

1. Conventionalizes motives to suit its purposes.
2. Repeats motives by rule.

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

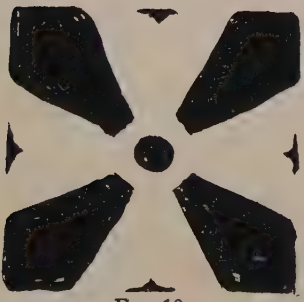


Fig. 10

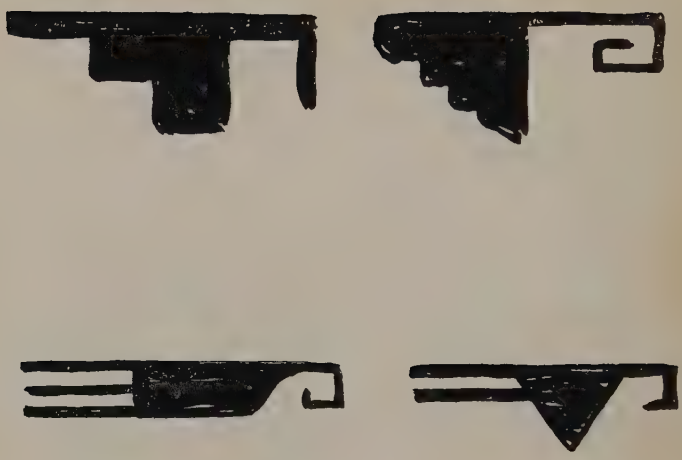


Fig. 11

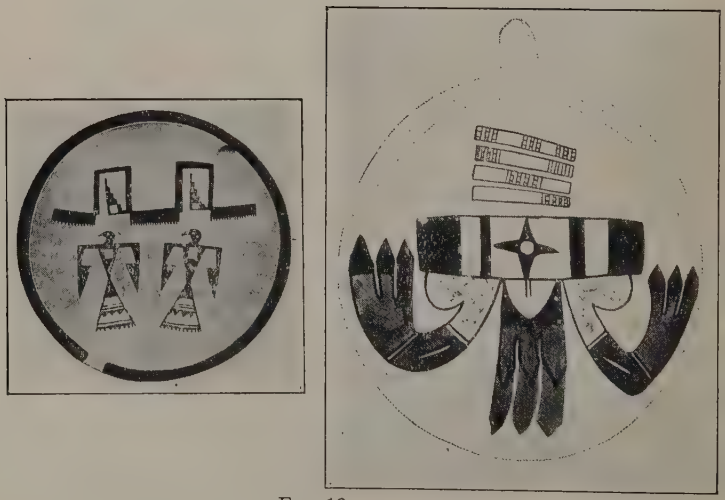


Fig. 12

3. Gives sensitive consideration to line, space, texture, and color relations.
4. Is confined usually to two dimensions, length and breadth.

1. DESIGN CONVENTIONALIZES MOTIVES TO SUIT ITS PURPOSES

Fig. 8 represents a flower drawn essentially as it exists in nature.

Fig. 9 is a simple conventionalization of this flower, and fig. 10 a more complex or abstract one, for purposes of design. The function of applied design is to decorate—to treat some surface so that it will give a pleasing sensation to the eye through the medium of regulated lines, spaces, and colors. Subject matter, as such, ceases to be important, ceases to distract the attention of the observer from this purely decorative quality. The design exists as an end in itself. The actual flower of fig. 8 is a satisfactory organization so long as it is considered an entity pertaining only to itself. But, immediately it is associated with another flower, even a duplicate of itself, and

that association translated into a drawing for decorative purposes, then the actual forms become inadequate. Some of them are superfluous, some have too much detail, some are the wrong shape to harmonize with the border within which they must fit, or with other forms inside that border. Omission, selection, and transformation become necessary, and when applied are called conventionalization.

Applied design is radical in the conventionalizing of its motives. It may go so far that a bird is changed into a barely recognizable abstraction, as in the Hopi pottery motives in figs. 11 and 12, or, on the other hand, the process may go only as far as the simplification of figs. 9, 13 and 14. But however far it goes there is always change—abstraction, distortion, and conventionalization of subject to suit the needs of the organization.

Pictorial design, in the modern sense, has an equal range. It may practice only selection and omission; it may conventionalize without distortion, as in the Assyrian lion, fig. 15; it may practice distortion of recognizable subject matter as in fig. 16; or it may go the extreme length to

FIG. 13

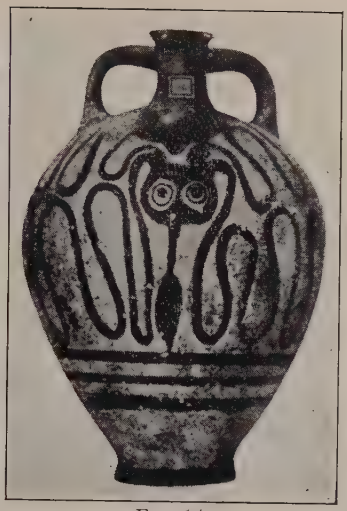


FIG. 14

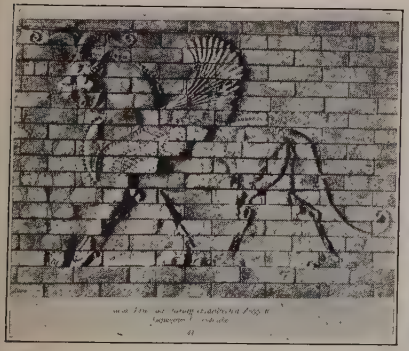


FIG. 15

FIG. 16

Fig. 17

Fig. 18

pure abstraction as in cubist painting, (see fig. 62). But whatever the degree the purpose remains the same—the moulding of subject matter into an harmonic entity, which, in the organized relations of its parts, thrills us through the sense of sight.

2. APPLIED DESIGN REPEATS MOTIVES BY RULE

The application of this statement is obvious. Fig. 17 is built up by repetition of the geometric flower pattern in fig. 10. Fig. 7 repeats the flower, leaf, and tendril motives. Fig. 13 repeats details within each bird as well as the entire birds themselves. Indeed, formal repetition is almost a universal quality of design.

Pictorial design also repeats motives, but by an infinitely more subtle rule. Instead of the exact and equally spaced repetition of fig. 17, it repeats only as dictated by the sensitive feeling of the artist. In "The Tea Party" by Gies, fig. 18, the wavy lines of the steam from the tea-pot are repeated twice, in reduced size and importance, in the wavy lines in the grass below, as are also

the circles of the cups in the circles of the flower-pots. The lines and forms of the two bodies repeat each other, but with variations, as in the forearms, which give emphasis and added interest.

In the works of the old masters the same type of sensitive repetition is universally made use of, as it is in the arts of Egypt, Assyria, China, etc.

3. APPLIED DESIGN GIVES SENSITIVE CONSIDERATION TO LINE, SPACE, TEXTURE, AND COLOR RELATIONS

If the lines of the design in fig. 7 (thought of, as marking the division between white and black masses) are looked at separately from all the other elements, it is seen instantly that they all have as definite a relation to each other as have the masses themselves. This relation is observed at once by a person with trained vision. If it can be seen or felt by an untrained observer, then that observer has passed the first grade in his journey toward comprehension of applied design.

In fig. 7, spaces can be considered in the same way. In seeing the spaces in a design it is neces-

sary to see the spaces around the motives as well as those taken up by the motives themselves. This is a tremendously important point. Every square inch of space within the borders of a picture should be so organized that it is a harmony, either as seen by itself or in relation to the whole. It is excellent practice to rule off into squares or diamond shapes, some picture by an old master and see how perfectly all spaces are organized. (See fig. 49). *Seeing* and *feeling* the right relation of spaces means passing the second grade toward comprehension of applied design.

Fig. 22 is a good example of texture relations. The word texture refers to the quality of a surface as to smoothness, roughness, hardness, etc. Texture relations in design are of the same importance as are the other relations just mentioned. Textures will be repeated for the sake of balance and rhythm, just as lines and spaces are repeated. Variety of texture is used to give variety of eye sensations.

Color relations in applied design comprise such a vast field that they can be only touched on here. Some idea of the complication of color combina-

tions is realized when the "color organ" is mentioned. The thought of such an organ seems fantastical at first, but when the possibilities are studied the sense of strangeness in the association of the words "color" and "organ" begins to disappear, and a close kinship to be recognized. Colors play with and against each other just as notes do in music. Certain colors demand other colors in order to produce harmony exactly as one note demands certain other notes to complete an harmonic chord. If, for instance, there were one especially important spot of vermillion in a design, then one or more touches of the same color, or a lighter shade of it, would be demanded in certain spots for balance, and the true designer would be as pained by their omission or bad placing as a musician would by a discord. Color perspective is an important part of color design. The blues and purples are cold colors and appear to recede from the eye, while the reds and yellows are warm and appear to come toward the eye. Thus an appearance of movement forward and backward in a design, or picture, can be obtained by the alternate use of warm

Fig. 19

Fig. 20

FIG. 21

Examples wherein the sensitive line, space, and texture relations of applied design have been carried over into three dimensional pictorial design. Note the variation in the repetition of leg lines in Fig. 19, of curves in Fig. 21, of shapes in Fig. 20, and of lines in the two horses manes in 19 etc., etc.

and cold colors. By such is form or volume expressed. Color values (by which is meant the place of colors in the scale from light, or white, to dark, or black) are inseparable from color design. A design may be "played" all in light values of the same colors, (in a high key, as it is called), or in medium, or in low values, (a low key). Or it may run the gamut of the scale. Colors, then, are made use of in color design for four main purposes, as follows:

Harmony
Repetition
Perspective or volume
Values

When it is realized that possible combinations of colors are practically limitless and the resulting hues and values are as numerous as are the possible combinations of tones on a piano, then the immensity of the range of problems in color design begins to be understood.[2]

[2] Of course the comparison to music is not limited to color. All the other visual elements that go into the building of a design have their counterparts in music. Lines might be compared to the air in music, spaces to time intervals, textures to emphasis,

All that has just been said about sensitive line, space, texture, and color relations in applied design is also true in pictorial design according to ancient and modern theory. (See fig. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24.) But the bridge that carries over in our minds from the one to the other has been washed out and must be rebuilt before we can see again these relations in pictures. The only method of rebuilding it, known to the writer, is, as has been said before, the method of hunting for the visual qualities in pictures—hunting intellectually, slowly and painfully, perhaps, but hunting with the object always in view of finally becoming visually, as well as mentally, aware of them, and thereby gaining the new and thrilling experience of visual esthetic emotion.

4. APPLIED DESIGN IS CONFINED USUALLY TO TWO DIMENSIONS

It is because such design is used for the decoration of surfaces that it is confined to two dimen-

forms to passages, etc. Control of the various relations in both cases determines the style.

sions, length and breadth. When a picture carries design over into three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness, the meaning of the word is greatly stretched. In three dimensional creation the field of decoration is abandoned. Greater goals are hazarded. Instead of being a part of a decorative scheme, a picture becomes an entity in itself. All mental associations of usefulness, conformity to outside demands, etc., are lost. It is a source of experience within itself. There is no word in the English language to cover this extra meaning. Therefore we must force the word design to extra duty—as has been done in these pages. The question of how design in three dimensions is achieved and applied in pictures is probably the largest question to be considered and will be taken up in detail in the following chapters.

One point just raised, however, is worthy of a moment's further attention. Pictures were referred to as three dimensional sources of experience. This, to many, certainly will be an unfamiliar way of thinking of them. But why not think of them as just that? To object to

this definition means that the objector thinks of pictures as pictographs, rather than as a means to visual sensation. His whole inheritance, of course, prompts him to think thus. It is the pictographic significance of pictures that is so constantly stressed in criticism, history, and every day discussion. When an individual is confronted with a picture it is almost an instinct to say, "That looks like——," or "That doesn't look like——," or "It certainly breathes the spirit of——," or "It is a powerful expression of——," or "It admirably suggests the——"; always the impulsive reaction is to something beyond or outside the picture itself, always the picture seems to be a sort of language for the transmission of facts or ideas to the mind. Applied design is about the only type of picture which does not have such extraneous connotations, though even in this field the authorities are continually explaining the religious siginificance of acanthus leaves, or that the break in the sky-band around a Hopi pot is to "let the spirits out." So nearly universal is this literary approach that one sometimes wonders if the race is

FIG. 22

An etching by Hopfer which is an excellent example of textures. Note the varying textures of hat, hair, fur coat, lettered panel and background. It has also very obvious design organization of big simplified lines, but the picture is built up in interest chiefly by the fascinating eye control with texture.

FIG. 23
THREE DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

FIG. 24
TWO DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

The above are good examples to show the difference between two and three dimensional design. Fig. 24 is not, of course, absolutely two dimensional for it suggests thickness but does so to such a slight extent that the contrast is evident. The design problem so admirably solved in the heads of the upper panel, (Fig. 23) is exactly the problem being solved by the moderns again to-day. It is French of the XIIth Century.

going blind—is losing the power to see objects as ends in themselves. Perhaps intelligence develops at the cost of the senses. Perhaps hearing will suffer gradually a like curtailment. It may be the day will come when we shall treat music as we now treat pictures and shall insist that a symphony "sound" like hens cackling in a barnyard or that it "express" this or "suggest" that. Of course, Wagnerian, and all other program music, is a big step in this direction. *Must intelligence destroy sensation?* Perhaps so. But consciousness of this tendency will make it possible to combat, at least, and probably to delay, its ravages in individual cases. Applied design is one field in which we are still allowed to see beautiful lines and spaces for no other purpose than that of pleasurable visual sensation (esthetic emotion). Pictorial design invites the extension of that experience into the field of paintings, sculptures, and prints. And, if one wishes to avoid extremes—does not care to experience pure, unadulterated sensation, he need only insist that, in pictures, the ideas and facts which he so loves, be presented to him through

the medium of three dimensional design, so that he may gain a pleasurable visual sensation in looking at them *in addition to* a pleasurable intellectual sensation in thinking about their subject matter. It is the achievement of this double purpose that so enriches the work of the old masters, and it is well to realize that failure to react in either one of these fields means the loss of one half of our inheritance from them.

FIG. 25
HOPI INDIAN

CHAPTER III

VISION

SINCE vision has become such a neglected function, and yet is of such supreme importance as the one and only means of comprehending those visual qualities which are basic in pictorial design, it will be necessary to *think* a bit about *seeing*.

In the previous chapter it was hinted that knowing may prevent seeing. Here is an experiment suggested by Jan Gordon[1] which is

[1] *Modern French Painters*, John Lane, London 1923.

most illuminating as a test of that possibility. A dozen persons without training in drawing are asked to draw a pail which is set on the floor in front of them so they may study it. A majority will draw it incorrectly with a flat

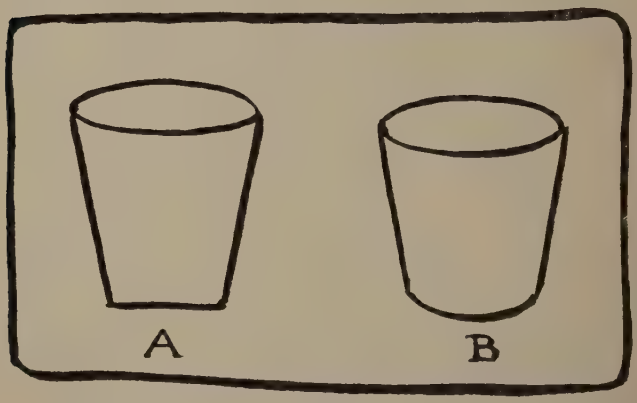


Fig. 26

bottom as in fig. 26 A. A minority will draw it correctly with an oval bottom, as shown in fig. 26 B. Why do the majority portray it thus incorrectly? The reason is this. They glance at the pail, then, with pencil poised over paper, begin to *think* about how to draw it. They *know* that the opening of a pail is round, and that such a round opening appears as an oval

FIG. 27

A picture in which cypress trees have been reduced to their simplest elements and woven into design. From the original etching "Cypress Grove" by the author.

The Arts

FIG. 28

An early American work by an unknown artist. Note the repetition of tree leaf textures, of small plants, the balance between large and small tree, the interesting play of land forms, the placing of the window squares and the contrast between them and the texture of round dots. The whole is most fascinating in the organization of its visual elements. Note how unimportant the story becomes in a picture like this.

in perspective. That is easy. No need even to look at the pail to find it out. So an oval is drawn. And the sides slope in toward the bottom. That is common knowledge. So the sides are drawn sloping in. Now, the bottom. How about the bottom? Why, the bottom is flat, of course. It sits on the floor. There is the pail to be looked at. Do their eyes tell them that the bottom repeats the oval of the top? No. Their minds tell them that it is flat and flat it is drawn. Their minds *know* so much about the bottoms of pails that their eyes cannot *see* a specific bottom directly in front of them. Their knowing prevents their seeing.

Here is another experiment. While inside a house in daytime, a piece of white paper is held up and compared to a black automobile on the street outside. The two extremes in value of the color scale are thus brought into contrast with each other, the lightest with the very darkest. It is positive and common knowledge that they are such extremes: there is no possibility of doubt. But, when looked at under the conditions stated, which *is* the darker? This question sounds so

absurd to nine out of ten untrained people that they check their impulse to answer, that of course the automobile is darker, being black, because they suspect a trick. It is actually almost impossible to get many to answer. But, if they can be convinced that the question is serious and will finally give an answer, they will say invariably, even while looking at the two objects, that the automobile is darker. They do not *see* the actual condition, which is that the white paper, being in shadow, appears many times darker in value than the black car which is outdoors in strong light. In this case, also, knowing prevents seeing. If they did not know that black is darker than white, they would be forced to pause and gaze intently and then would *see* that white, in that particular situation, was much darker than black.

Blindness is defined as "lack of sight." The two experiments indicate lack of seeing. Does lack of seeing indicate blindness? If one stops to think of its ramifications this situation is appalling. If we are blind to the two actualities of the two experiments, we are blind to

thousands of other actualities. We know that the leaves of trees are green; we do not see that sky reflections may, in some cases, turn them to actual blue. We know a rose is red; we do not see the hundred changes in degree of red from noon to dark. Are we going through life literally as blind as bats, not realizing that we are missing a whole world of sensation through the sense of sight—that we are as visual cripples hobbling through a dark alley when the life and gayety of the boulevard is but half a block to one side of us?

No. We are not quite as blind as bats. We do see to a certain extent. We see life moving all about. We see beautiful sunsets, and mountain peaks, and butterfly wings, and roses, and other pleasing as well as repulsive sights. What kind of vision is it then that we do exercise?

There are four main kinds of vision. They are:

1. Practical vision.
2. Curious vision.
3. Imaginative or reflective vision.
4. Pure vision.

1. PRACTICAL VISION

If an automobile stalls on a grade crossing, and up the track the driver sees an express train coming at full speed, he does not sit back and contemplate the design of the engine, he gives his complete energy to getting out of the way. In his able analysis of this type of vision, Jan Gordon designates it as "vision with resultant action." It is a very practical sort of vision. The same type of vision locates objects to be used in daily activities. There is the telephone, a table, a chair. One's eyes look at these objects and convey to the mind the information necessary to make them available for use. The objects are not seen as ends in themselves. Their actual forms and proportions are not studied, or even observed, and could not be described, or drawn from memory. In the words of Clive Bell [2] "the labels on the things are seen instead of the actual things themselves." This is practical vision with resultant action.

[2] Stokes. N. Y. 1924.

To continue Jan Gordon's simile, one may go to a movie and see a picture of an automobile stalled in front of an oncoming train. The need for resultant action is removed. There is time for a leisurely contemplation of the design of the engine, and for observing infinitely more of what is happening than was possible when the observer was himself an actor in the scene. The motion picture, then, calls forth a type of vision which is more observant and, therefore, is one step beyond the merely practical vision, though it still comes under that head.

If one looks at a street scene reflected in a mirror there is the same sense of detachment from actual physical participation in the scene itself. If a passing friend were recognized there would not be the same impulse to hail him as there would be were the vision direct. The scene in the mirror is unreal even though familar; it can be looked at as a picture of a scene instead of the scene itself. The need for resultant action is removed; objects and action will be observed much more accurately than if seen in

life direct. So vision through the medium of the mirror, as that through the medium of the film, is also a step in development beyond the practical.

In both cases, however, the picture seen is absolutely true to life; it reflects all details as they actually exist; it changes the essentual character of none. In other words it is a purely representative picture. And, since it is a human failing to get pleasure out of recognizing in a picture what is already familar in life, it is easy to understand the wide-spread popularity of all representative pictures—particularly the motion picture which allows just that recognition. A purely representative maker of pictures is attempting what the mirror and camera can do infinitely better than he, and his work is popular for exactly the same reasons. If art has to do with the creative changing of natural objects into design, then the pictures of the mirror, camera, and the strictly representative painter, have not started to approach the most outlying border of the province of art—have not, in fact even turned in that direction.

2. CURIOUS VISION

The most practical of business men, who habitually uses his eyes only to recognize labels on things, will often display an interest in some curiosity—a precious stone or an oddity of some kind—and he will observe this with a keenness of vision which he never bestows on ordinary or familar objects. The accurate, observing vision of the scientist, such as that of the botanist or ornithologist, might be included under this head since it is not common enough to warrant a separate classification here. But it is interesting to note that this keen, analytical vision, while it may see all the structural and scientific facts which come within its special department of knowledge, may, and probably does, remain absolutely blind to the pattern relations of the units observed. A scientist, for instance, whose special field is Archæology, and who has made a scientific study of particular works of art such as Hopi pottery, may see, in the designs he studies, all the historical, ethnological and symbolical significance, and be blind totally to

the art significance. The designs, as designs, stripped of all related facts and ideas, may leave him cold. It never may have entered his consciousness (from experience or otherwise) that they have an esthetic significance of their own. And not having experienced it, he may even go so far as to deny its existence.[3] This is the *curious* vision, which in spite of its limitations, is a big step beyond the practical. But it, like the practical, has not gazed even from afar upon the glorious country of art.

3. IMAGINATIVE AND REFLECTIVE VISION

If, after a motion picture performance, one goes home, and, during the quiet of the night, calls up in his "mind's eye" the picture he has just seen, or some similar event in his own experience, this becomes the imaginative or reflective vision. With it he has free play. He can review scene after scene from his past life,

[3] A most interesting example of this type of scientific mind is that of H. G. Spearing, who, in his *Childhood of Art* (Putmans, 1913), continually shows that he is unaware of the design significance in the very works about which he is writing.

and, if he has the imaginative ability, can add to them, color them, see fairies and goblins and things that never existed. Imaginative pictures, such as the illustrations of Arthur Rackham, and all historical pictures, grow out of this type of vision in the artist and stimulate it in the observer. It is a third big step beyond the practical and the first yet mentioned which is in itself a passport allowing its possessor to cross the borders of the world of art. Until it is achieved art is a foreign country with closed ports.

4. PURE VISION

This is the type of vision which is undeveloped almost universally and with which we are here chiefly concerned. It sees objects as ends in themselves, disconnecting them from all practical and human associations. To such vision a rusty tin can may be of more interest than a hundred karat diamond. For it sees the tin can and the diamond for what they actually appear to be, forms, textures, and colors. The form of the can, particularly if somewhat bent, may be more

intriguing to the eye in its irregularity than the form of the diamond, in its geometric regularity. And, on the other hand, the hard smooth texture of the diamond, with its reflection of light and color, may be more interesting than the texture of the can. In either case, money value would not enter into the consideration, for such value is an extranous fact entirely outside the concerns of the eye. If one looks at a chair with pure vision, he does not think of the chair as something to sit upon; he observes it with wonder. He sees its form, lines, and proportions. He sees the patterns which the accidental lighting of the moment makes upon it. He examines it as one marvelling at a new discovery, for, though he has seen hundreds of similar chairs in his life, and even this one particular chair perhaps hundreds of times, he has never before seen it as it now appears. Never before has it been in exactly the same place on the floor, or been turned exactly the same way, with exactly the same degree of light on it, coming from the same source. And if the chair be moved one inch, or a different light be switched on in the room, the

whole design is changed instantly. This is pure vision and it is intriguing beyond words. When using it one's environment becomes of infinite variety and absorbing interest. The work of all artists, either representative or creative, is based on this type of vision. The representative artist puts into his picture what he sees while exercising it—the creative artist uses it to collect data which he later builds into his design.

Recognition of the existence of these four types of vision, then, makes it more possible to understand the common, habitual reaction to pictures and points the way to a possible enlarging of experience in that direction. The first three types, the practical, curious, and imaginative, because they are habitual in daily life, have become habitual in looking at pictures. And all three of them cause their owners to be interested in practical matters in the pictures—in the data which it records, in matters of skill, story, truth, etc. If anyone using these three types of vision looks at a picture in which the trees, let us say, have been made universal instead of particular —that is, in which the trees have had all their

pictorially meaningless branches and wiggles omitted, and the essential shape then changed to meet the needs of design, (see fig. 27) he is at once more or less incensed. His practical vision at once asks, "What are they, cacti—or toadstools—or sausages?" When told that they are trees, though the fact is of relative unimportance because the artist has aimed at another goal than that of copying, he is prompted, by this same practical or curious, or even imaginative vision, which latter is given to imagining additional facts or stories rather than pure forms, to great mirth and to the final absurdly obvious statement "But they don't *look like* trees!" Any other function than that of *looking like* something is entirely beyond comprehension. It simply does not exist for the person exercising only these three types of vision.

The attainment of further adventure in seeing pictures, therefore, depends on what we have called *pure vision.* In that direction, and in that direction only, lie the new horizons which have been revealed for us by the Modern Movement.

CHAPTER IV

RELATION OF LINES, SHAPES AND FORMS IN PICTURES

HAVING seen that the so-called pure vision is the type with which we are chiefly concerned in looking at pictures if we wish to see the design element in them, we can now take up the interesting question of how an untrained observer may develope this vision and make use of it. To attempt this goal it will be necessary to go further into the consideration of design in general, to dissect it down to the very bones of the skeleton out of which it is built—the interrelations of lines, shapes and forms, and their effects on the human eye. Since such analysis, however, is for the benefit of the observer of pictures rather than the maker of them, it will not be necessary to undertake a complete exploration of the fields entered. The aim will be to discover certain basic visual facts, familiarity

with which will help one to see the visual content of pictures. If he here learns to recognize ten such basic facts on sight, his own interest and curiosity will lead him to the discovery and application of the next twenty.

Every picture which was ever made, or ever will be made, has two dimensional relations of

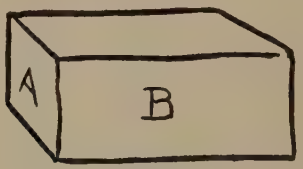


Fig. 29

its elements; every picture that deals with thickness, has both two and three dimensional relations. The inside of a room has three dimensions, length, breadth and height. A three dimensional picture represents, on a flat surface, the contents of a certain amount of space such as that contained in a room. Imagine a box, fig. 29, placed in this room. Any single side of this box, such as A, is itself a flat plane. The edges of that side, and the lines used to show

them, are naturally in the same plane of the side, and may be said, therefore, to be in two dimensional relation to each other. A different side of the box, such as B, is a different plane extending in a different direction, of which the same is true. Lines within, or bordering one plane, therefore, are in two dimensional relation with each other, whereas lines of one plane, when compared to lines of another plane, are in three dimensional relation to each other. It is well to remember, by the way, that there are no "lines" in nature. What is called a line, and is drawn as a line, is merely the edge which marks the actual or visual meeting of two planes.

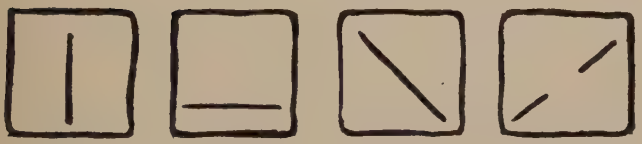
A vertical line or form in nature gives a sense of stabilized power. It is dynamic, forceful, but poised. The eye observing it is impelled upward. A horizontal line gives an opposite feeling of repose, peace, absence of power. The vertical line suggests possible activity, that of tipping or falling; the horizontal one has fallen, is at rest, and allows the eye to travel leisurely back and forth along its length. A diagonal up-

right line is action itself. It is falling. And, like the vertical, it impels the eye positively in a certain direction. Let us now consider these lines as they are made use of in pictorial design.

THE ALPHABET OF PICTORIAL DESIGN
LINES—SHAPES—FORMS

IN TWO DIMENSIONS—LINES

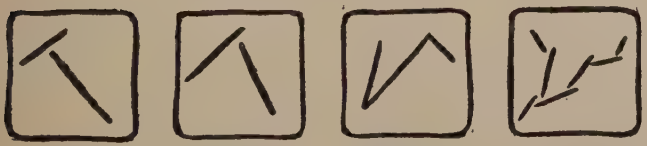
Varieties of Straight Lines



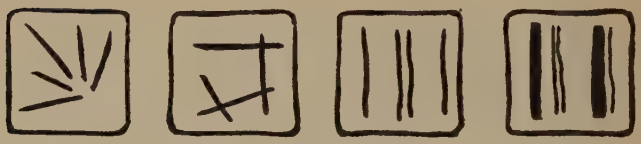
VERTICAL HORIZONTAL DIAGONAL INTERRUPTED

These are the four main types of straight lines that may be used in pictures. They can be heavy or light, long, short, or tapering.

Relations of Straight Lines



OPPOSED EQUALLY OPPOSED UNEQUALLY JOINED OR ANGULAR TRANSITIONAL

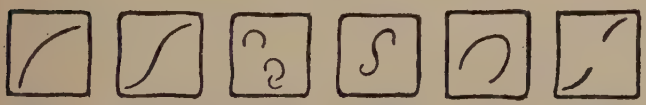


RADIATING CROSSED RHYTHMIC

These are a few of the simplest combinations from the infinite number possible. One of the most basic of all laws of relations of lines in pictorial design is that any one dominant line in a picture needs another to stop the eye that follows its direction from going out of the picture—to turn it back within the frame. In the equally opposed lines shown above, the upper line does this, but, being at right angles, and equally spaced, it throws the eye either up or down. As placed in the next example, it throws the eye up. When two lines meet forming an angle, the eye is thrown in the pointed direction and again needs to be stopped and further controlled. Transitional lines lead the eye from one to the other with a series of breaks that are agreeable and give emphasis to the varied direction. Radiating lines draw the eye to a definite focus

and are often used to concentrate interest on an important spot in the picture. Crossed lines attract and hold the eye, and give infinite possibilities for right arrangement, as is evidenced by the pleasing quality of plaid designs. Rhythmic arrangements of lines should affect us through the sense of sight exactly as rhythmic sounds do through the sense of hearing. The response of human beings to the rhythm of music, from the simplified form of the Indian drum, or the brass band, to the complex form of the symphony orchestra, is practically universal, but the response to the same quality in arrangements of lines and spaces is relatively slight because, and in the writer's belief only because, it has had insufficient opportunity for development.

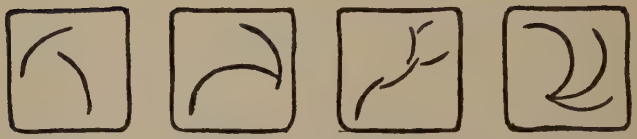
Varieties of Curved Lines



SINGLE SLOW | DOUBLE SLOW | SINGLE QUICK | DOUBLE QUICK | OVAL | INTERRUPTED

All may be heavy, light, tapering, etc.

Relations of Curved Lines



OPPOSED EQUALLY | JOINED CURVING ANGLES | TRANSITIONAL | RADIATING

SLOW WITH QUICK | FLOWING | RHYTHMIC

Again infinite variations and all degrees are possible, and the control of the eye in these, and the following combinations, is the same as indicated above for straight lines.

Combinations of Straight and Curved Lines

OPPOSED STRAIGHT AGAINST CURVED | OPPOSED CURVED AGAINST STRAIGHT | OPPOSED ANGLE AGAINST CURVED | OPPOSED CURVED AGAINST ANGLE | RELATED

Relation of Lines, Shapes, Forms

In any picture there are many lines and in one sense they are all related to each other. The point is, are the relations intentional—are they *felt* by the artist? In a representative picture with, for instance, the fussy lines of tree branches copied as they exist in nature, it will be evident at a glance that the lines are *not* in relation.[1] When relations are considered, forms and lines are automatically simplified and controlled to that end. This is easily evident to one who looks for it.

SHAPES

Varieties of Shapes

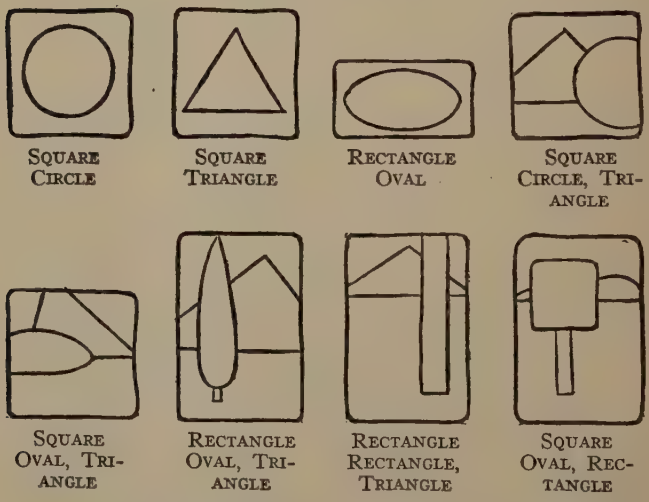
SQUARE RECTANGLE TRIANGLE OVAL CIRCLE

One or the other of the first two of these shapes is used in practically every picture as a border. Beyond such use they do not often occur in their pure shapes, but often in their essential shapes.

[1] See fig. 77.

Variations are again infinite but should be seen for what they are essentially. When the eye looks into a square it travels across and back, up and down, and is equally rebuffed in any direction. In a rectangle the action is the same. In a circle, or oval, the eye travel is round and round, placidly—no rebuffs, no escape.

Relations of Shapes

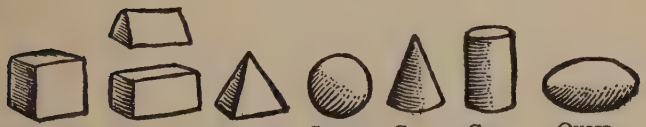


In addition to the elements named above, notice the additional shapes of spaces that are formed around the squares, ovals, etc. It can

be seen at a glance at these simplest of all pictures that the problem of placing the most elemental shapes into a picture so that they seem *right* to the eye, is a serious problem and calls for exactly the same type of sensitiveness that governed a Titian when he was painting his masterpiece. And if an observer recognizes this quality in a masterpiece he will also recognize it, and respond to it emotionally, in the *right* arrangement of a square, an oval and a triangle. And, on the other hand, if he can sense the right relation of these simplest of all shapes, he is on the road to sensing the right relations of the masterpiece, as well as the wrong relations of inferior work.

IN THREE DIMENSIONS—FORMS

Varieties of Forms



CUBE | PARALLELOPIPED AND TRIANGULAR PRISM | PYRAMID | SPHERE | CONE | CYLINDER | OVOID

All forms in nature can be reduced to these primary geometric solids. A mountain is a cone or pyramid. A tree-top is a cube, sphere, or ovoid, its trunk a cylinder. A house is a parallelopiped plus a triangular prism. To so reduce such objects for purposes of pictorial design simplifies the problem to its lowest possible terms, both for the artist and observer, and, as a visual adventure, is most stimulating.

Combinations of Forms

HOUSE, PYRAMID, CONE, OVOID

CYLINDER, CONE OVOID, PYRAMID

OVOID, PYRAMID CYLINDER, CUBE

The heavy problem of picture building is amply indicated in these three examples.

When a picture is looked at, the organized relations of its lines, spaces, forms, etc., should be felt emotionally rather than thought about in-

tellectually. But since we, to-day, have almost lost the ability to respond to pictures emotionally (with that type of emotion called esthetic to distinguish it from the emotions of love, hate, etc.) it becomes necessary to bring this ability within the realm of consciousness again by actively *thinking about* the pictorial elements which exist to be *seen* and *felt*. Thinking in this case may lead to seeing and feeling. At least there is hope in that direction, whereas there is certainly no hope in a continued state of unconsciousness. Take the case of the simplified examples just shown. What is there to be seen and felt in the arrangement of shapes in fig. 30?

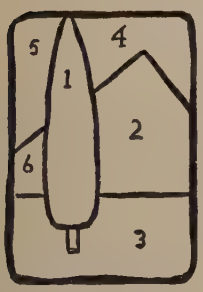


Fig. 30

Space 1 is essentially an oval.
Space 2 is irregular.
Space 3 is a cut-into rectangle.
Space 4 is irregular.
Space 5 is an irregular rectangle.
Space 6 is irregular.

Spaces 5, 4, 6, 2 make up a square behind space 1.

The total space enclosed in border is a rectangle.

The making of this list is evidence of the intellectual recognition of the visual elements which make up this particular picture. The question now naturally arises, are these elements, or spaces, in the *right* relation to each other? Behind this question lies the very kernel of the hard-shelled nut we are trying to crack. What is a *right* relation of lines, spaces, forms, textures and colors?

In all frankness, it must be admitted that this supremely vital question cannot be answered in words. At least it is certain that it could not be answered in a hundred, or a thousand pages of words alone. It is tempting to say that it cannot be answered without training in drawing. It is obvious that comprehension comes most surely, after long training and practice, with attained pictorial expression. But,—and this "but " is the only justification of the present experiment—there is a chance, and certainly not a negligible one, that comprehension of the rightness of pictorial relations may come also thr ıgl

familiarity with right examples. Familiarity with good music breeds desire for good music where there was none before, and this desire can only grow out of some form of comprehension of rightness. The comprehension may be rudimentary and incoherent, inhabiting only the depths of the unconscious mind, yet it is there, it does exist. Perhaps training in expression makes comprehension more conscious and coherent, whereas familiarity only stirs blind desire. However the condition is explained, familiarity with great art in any medium does do something to the human soul—does release a blind hunger, a deep rooted need, that, even though it may lie dormant and ignored for most of a lifetime, is, nevertheless, as much a part of our human organism as the bones and blood vessels themselves. If familiarity, then, does have this possible power, it is the one great hope of the observer of art—the one chance for the individual who has not the time for training and practice in expression, to gain some degree of comprehension of works of art—to answer for himself the question, is this arrangement right? And if

familiarity can give so much, then every possible extension of it is valuable—even the *thinking about* relations which should be *felt.*

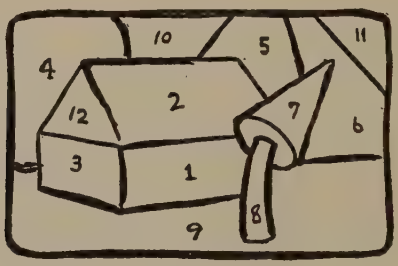


Fig. 31

When a picture progresses from two into three dimensions, the complication increases accordingly. In addition to the two dimensional relations of the parts of a single one-plane shape, there are the three dimensional relations of such a shape to others in different planes, as well as the three dimensional relations of the solid forms to each other. In fig. 31 what relations are there to be seen and felt? Here is a partial list.

In Three Dimensions there are the relations to each other and the border of the picture of:

House

Pyramid

Ovoid
Cone
Cylinder

IN THREE DIMENSIONAL relations of two dimensional shapes, there are such relations as those of:

Space 2 to space 5
Space 9 to space 10 and 11
Space 6 to space 4, etc., etc.,
Space 2 to the plane of border rectangle, etc.,

IN TWO DIMENSIONAL relations of lines forming parts of a single plane, or of lines to each other regardless of planes, there are such as:

Opposed equally
Opposed unequally
Curved opposed to straight
Angle against curve, etc., etc.

Here again the elements have been recognized, and the rightness of their relations may be thought about and felt. Is the house in the right proportion to the whole picture? Is the foreground space 9 interesting to the eye as a shape, and do the spaces 10 and 11 properly

balance it? Is the tree 7 just the right distance from the side, and does it cut into the space 6 to just the right extent to make that space satisfying? Is the ovoid 4 the right size in relation to the pyramid and house? These and many other questions may be asked and their answer felt. Some trust may be placed in these sample pictures for they have been organized with considerable care and are essentially good designs.

BALANCE

There are many ways of obtaining balance in a picture. There can be color balance, where a small spot of intense color will balance a much larger spot of a subdued tint of the same, or other color; there is tonal balance, and balance of lines, shapes, forms, etc.

Fig. 32

Actual physical balance of fulcrum and lever is obtained in any of the ways shown in fig. 32.

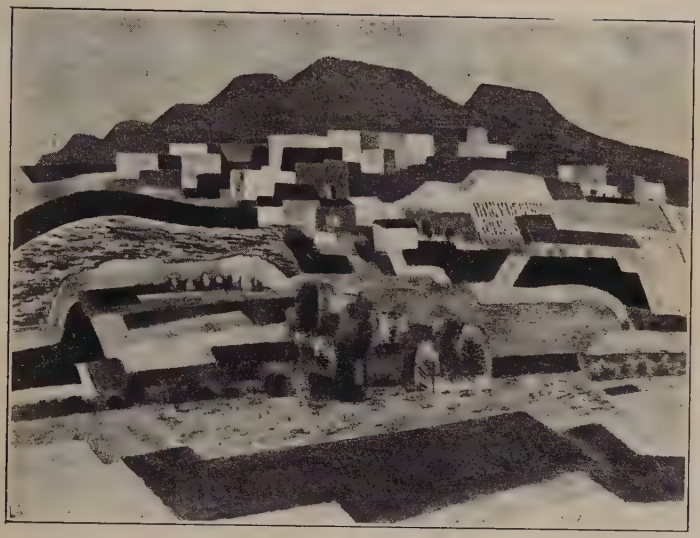


FIG. 35
ANDREW DASBURG

FIG. 36
HENRY MCFEE

Here are two paintings by contemporary Americans which reduce houses and mountains to geometric solids and build them into design. In the McFee note the three dimensional play of roof planes with each other. In the Dasburg note the transforming of fields into semi-abstract spots for purposes of design, also the weaving of color values. Note that both stand the test of being looked at upside down.

Fig. 37
Greek Vase about 450 B. C.

Pictorial balance may be illustrated in general by the diagram of fig. 33.

Fig. 33

All three of these satisfy the eyes as balanced arrangements. The first is formal and stiff and would be used in such a picture as an Assyrian relief of a procession of standing figures, though the formality would always be relieved by controlled irregularities at intervals. As the near form increases in size and fills more of the space about it, it is balanced by a smaller form at a greater distance surrounded by a larger empty space. In color balance the small spot would increase in intensity and the large decrease as they changed in size. All good pictures, either representative or designed, use this law of balance. It is one of the shortcomings of the former that they stop with the application of such a law as this—do not go beyond it and change the forms represented to conform to farther laws of design.

With the foregoing alphabet of design in mind it should now be possible to turn to works of art of any time or place and see more in them than is possible without such an understanding of their architecture. Take a simple partial abstraction such as fig. 34. Turn it upside down so the fact that it represents a bird may be forgotten, and the eyes look at it as an aggregation

Fig. 34

of lines, shapes, and colors, (black, white, and grey being thought of as colors). Here in this one drawing by an unknown Hopi Indian lies the secret of all pictorial art of all the ages.

With half closed eyes gaze at it for five minutes —ten minutes. Feel the relation of shape to shape and line to line. Note the large black triangle and how it is balanced by the lesser spots of black and by the extremely important angular line of the legs. See the repetition of curved lines, the slow and quick curve of the head, and the curving angles where head meets body, also the repetition of squares and rectangles. But also note the variation of repeated elements that differentiates pictorial from formal applied design, and adds interest by so doing. As complication in pictures increases, variation increases, adding richness of visual experience.

CHAPTER V

STATIC AND DYNAMIC SYMMETRY AND THE DIAGONAL

SO far the very simplest A B C's of the design approach have been discussed. And, since the purpose of this book is to provide tools rather than carve paths, that general policy will be adhered to throughout. But an event has recently transpired in the art world that is of such vast importance to the highest development of contemporary design that it cannot be ignored in any type of investigation. That event is Jay Hambidge's rediscovery of the principles of what he calls dynamic symmetry, i. e., that type of symmetry which is present in the proportions of the human body, in growing plants, and in the arts of the Greeks and Egyptians.

As a result of his research, (some twenty years of it), Hambidge divides all design into two

classes, static and dynamic. Static design is that type which has been made use of in all ages and which has been considered heretofore in these pages. In contrasting the two types he says that the determination of the basic principles in a specific example of design means, in a sense, the elimination of the personal element. The residue then represents the planning knowledge of the artist. The higher and more perfect the art the richer the residue. Saracenic, Mahomedan, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Hindu, Assyrian, Coptic, Byzantine or Gothic art analysis shows a conscious use of plan schemes, but with a type of symmetry different from that found in the growing plant or human figure, and which may be arrived at through the intuition of the artist. Greek and Egyptian analysis, on the other hand, shows a superior type which corresponds with that of the plant and the human, and which can only be arrived at through the geometric relations of areas computed with the aid of mathematics. The former is static, the latter living, or dynamic, symmetry.

Dynamic symmetry was discovered by the

Egyptians and applied to temple proportions and bas-relief, was taken over by the Greeks about the sixth century B. C. and developed by them into the purest art expression ever attained by man. The Greek temples, sculptures and vases are built on it during the five hundred years of the golden age after which time the secret was totally lost until its present rediscovery. Dynamic symmetry, or living proportion, is strikingly exemplified in the position relations of the seed pods in a sun-flower. It can be expressed by a series of numbers, called the summation series, in which any one is always the sum of the preceding two, as 1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34 55 89 etc. It was developed by the Greeks through geometry, and the great lost secret of its application lay in the fact that, instead of depending on the proportion to each other of single lines, it depended on the proportion to each other of squares and rectangles of which any given line formed one side. Endless attempts to explain Greek symmetry in linear terms have been made during the Christian era, but no one had thought of explaining it in terms of areas.

Static and Dynamic Symmetry

Dynamic symmetry as applied, for instance, to a Greek vase governs every proportion of every least part from the height-width relation to the position of the handle and every fluting or curve of the stem. Given one of the correct over-all proportions, an infinite variety of correctly related sub-proportions becomes possible, just as in music, within one key, infinite harmonious creation is possible. In his book[1] Hambidge gives diagramatic analysis of many actual Greek vases taken from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and elsewhere, which will give the reader a clear conception of the variety and complication of the design themes of these design masterpieces of all time. In temple architecture the application was as thorough, and the same doubtless held in sculpture, though the results of his investigations therein have not, as yet, been published. The application to the human body, and the possibilities of application to pictures are amply indicated in the pages of his too short-lived magazine, the *Diagonal.* Since our con-

[1] *Dynamic Symmetry and the Greek Vase,* Yale University Press, 1920.

cern is with this latter field of pictures and lack of space forbids comprehensive study, we shall limit our investigation to the fundamentals and their application to that field, i. e., to the four most important dynamic rectangles, and to the diagonals by means of which they are determined.

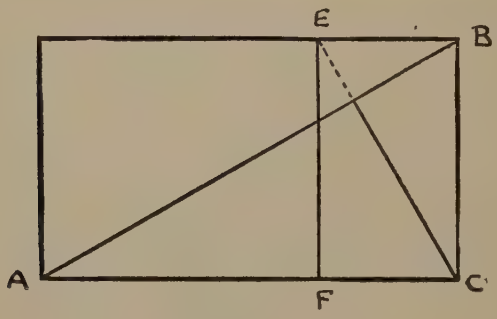


Fig. 38

The dynamic proportions of rectangles are arrived at by means of diagonals and verticals to the diagonals passing through a different corner, as in fig. 38 and extended to meet the side, as at E. The line EF is then drawn completing a small rectangle within the large one which is said to be "similar" to the large one because it has the same, though reduced, proportions. When the small rectangle is of such a size that

it is one half, third, fourth, or fifth of the larger then it is in dynamic relation to it.

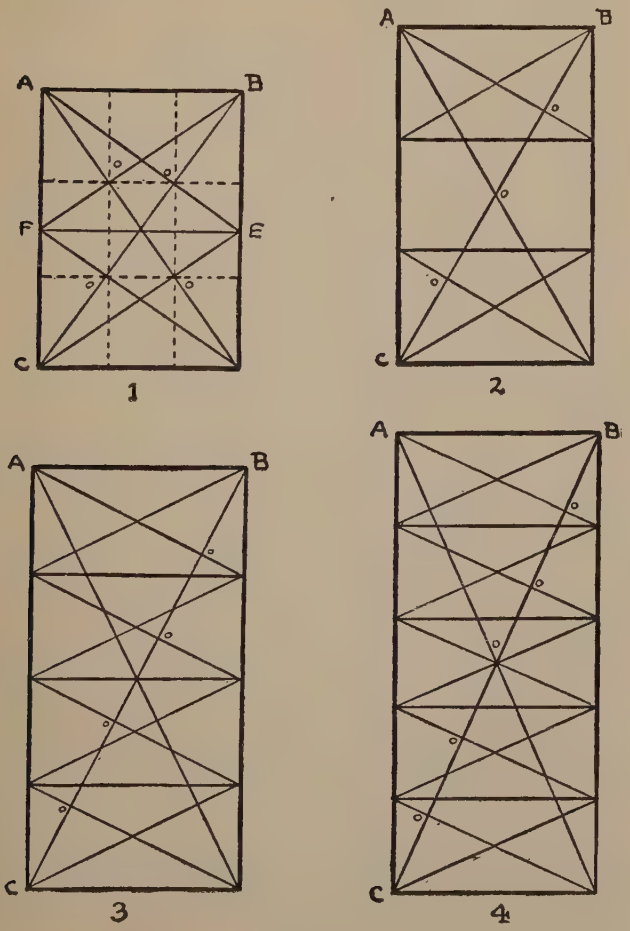


Fig. 39

In the rectangle 1 of fig. 39 the square of which the end line AB is one side is exactly one half the area of the square of which the side line AC forms one side. In this case the ratio between the end line AB and the side line AC is 1.4142 which is the square root of 2. The rectangle is called, therefore, a root two rectangle. A moment's thought will indicate how impossible it would be to find this proportioned rectangle without considering areas instead of lines. The proportion of the lines to each other is incommensurate, (i. e. the one cannot be divided into the other without a fraction), whereas the proportion of the squares indicated by the lines is commensurate, or divisible evenly. This is the gist of the Hambidge discovery and its tremendous importance is seen at a glance even without knowledge of the elaborate geometrical data which supports it.

If a perpendicular to the diagonal CB is drawn through the corner A, and extended to meet the side at E, and the line EF drawn to complete the rectangle FB within the larger one, then, by this means, dynamic proportion has been established between the two. If the corresponding small

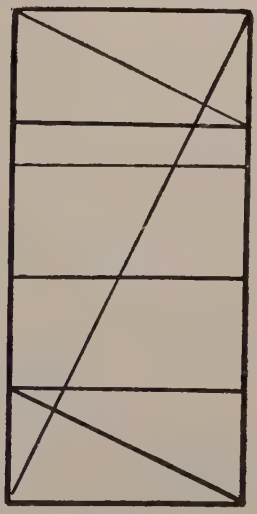
GREEK

AMERICAN

FIG. 40

1

GREEK



2

AMERICAN

FIG. 41

Fig. 42
Titian

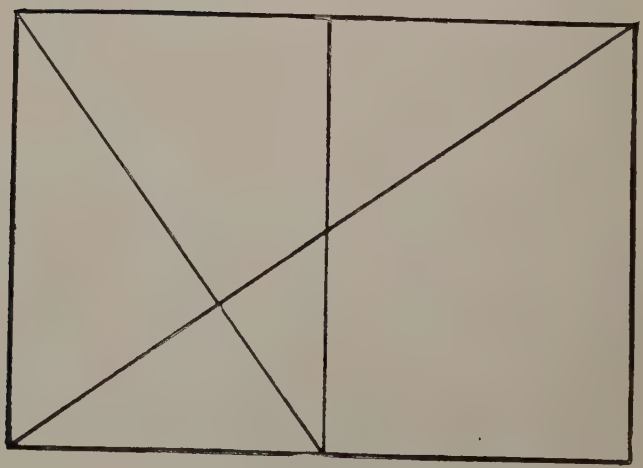


Fig. 43

rectangle EC is found at the opposite end of the large one, and lines drawn both ways through the eyes O, where the diagonals of the larger intersect the diagonals of the smaller, the larger rectangle will be divided both ways into three equal areas, as shown by dotted lines.

In the rectangle 2 the square of which the end AB forms one side is exactly one third of the area of the square of which the side line AC forms one side. In this case the ratio between the end line AB and side line AC is 1.732, or the square root of three. The rectangle is, therefore, a root three rectangle. If the other inside rectangles are found and lines drawn through the eyes O the large rectangle will be divided both ways into four equal areas.

In the rectangle 3 the end square is one-fourth the side square. In this case the ratio between the end AB and side AC is 2 or the square root of 4, and the rectangle is a root four rectangle. Lines drawn through the eyes O parallel to the side or end will divide the large one into 5 equal areas both ways.

In the rectangle 4 the end square is one-fifth

of the side square. In this case the ratio between the end and side is 2.236, or the square root of 5, which makes it a root five rectangle. This is the rectangle on which the Parthenon is built, and which was most often used in Greek architecture and vases. The locating of the similar root five rectangles within the large one, and of others within these, and various combinations of large and small, would determine the locations of rows of columns, wall divisions, etc.

This much of Hambidge's theory has been superficially reported because it bears most directly on the present subject of pictorial design. If significant proportions of rectangles, arrived at through the use of the diagonal and the perpendicular to the diagonal, are basic in architectural and vase design it would seem to follow that they will also be basic in picture design.

The diagonal, like the symmetry to which it is a means, has suffered a loss of identity during the Christian era, though its eclipse has been periodic and partial and not complete, as in the latter case. That the principle of the diagonal, if not of the complete theory, was fundamental

in the training of the old masters of Europe is obvious from a study of the work of such men as Tintoretto, Gozzoli, Raphael, Titian in the south, and Dürer, Rembrandt, Brueghel in the north. As representation gains in popularity through the 17th and 18th centuries the decline in vitality of design organization reveals itself also in the work. During these periods the spark is kept alive only by such individuals at Tiepolo, Goya and others who must have sadly passed the secret on from master to student as they watched the orgy of skillful imitation press against them from all sides. But it did live. The line held, up to Renoir, Seurat, Daumier and the rebirth of classicism of which they were a part. And in the last few years the teachings of Hambidge and a steadily increasing understanding of modern principles, have widened the understanding of the diagonal, though, since Hambidge's printed teachings have been confined largely to architecture and the Greek vase, it is a question how far it has been applied to pictures.

The four root rectangles just shown provide a skeleton framework of dynamic proportion into

which a picture can be built which must, of necessity, absorb therefrom inherent dynamic quality. The question as to how many of the great pictures have been built into such proportions is an interesting one, and, since the testing of them is so simple a matter, easy to answer. One diagonal of the enclosing shape, and a perpendicular to it through the opposite corner, will tell the story. If, as has been explained, the rectangle formed by extending the perpendicular to the side, and completing it as in fig. 38, divides the whole rectangle into two, three, four, or five equal areas, then dynamic symmetry is present. Let us test several pictures of various periods to try out the theory.

First take a Greek example, Fig. 40 and compare it with an almost identical shape, "The Pot of Basil" by John W. Alexander. The shape of the rectangle enclosing the former is as shown in fig. 41 sketch 1, while the shape of the rectangle of the latter is as shown in sketch 2. The diagonal and perpendicular to it of the Greek rectangle divide it into four equal parts, or a

Fig. 44
Jules Breton

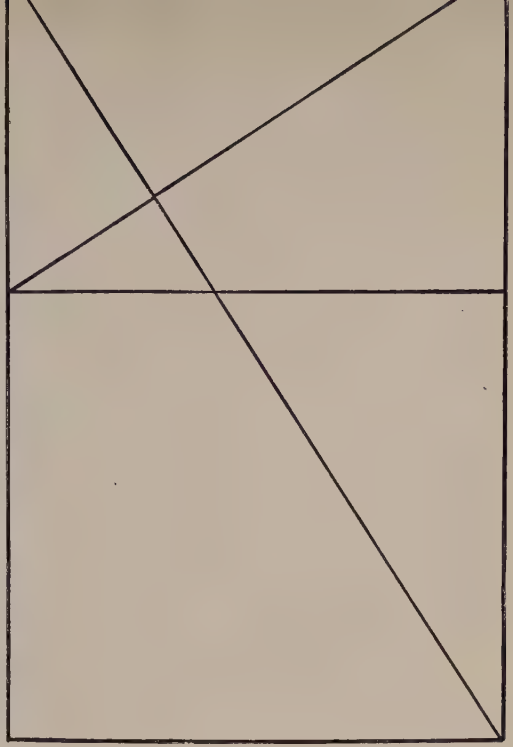


Fig 45

FIG. 46
SISTINE MADONNA, RAPHAEL

root four rectangle. It therefore, has dynamic proportions. The Alexander shape divides into five unequal parts and misses dynamic proportions. To be accurate in such a process measurements should be taken from the original work. Measurements from photographs, as in these cases cannot be trusted as absolutely accurate, but will serve to demonstrate the process.

In Titian's "Danæ," fig. 42 the shape of the picture, from a photograph, is as shown in fig. 43. A diagonal and perpendicular divide the space into two equal areas. It is, therefore a root two rectangle, which would seem to indicate that Titian was aware of enough of the method to arrive at so much of the result, for these exact measurements could hardly be arrived at accidentally.

In "The Song of the Lark by Jules Breton fig. 44 the space divides as shown in fig 45 unequally, and therefore misses dynamic proportion.

Raphael, on the other hand, though he was a supreme master of diagonal organization, misses

dynamic proportion in his *Sistine Madonna* (fig. 46) by a very small fraction of space, as shown in fig. 47.

Paintings of to-day made on stock sizes of canvas such as 12 × 14, 16 × 20, 24 × 30, 30 × 40, etc. and etchings and wood-blocks made on accidental shapes, would, of course, all miss these significant proportions.

We have been considering, in the above, the external shapes of pictures; now let us get inside the border and consider the architecture of the picture itself. If diagonals determine significant border proportions, they should determine also significant internal relations.

One of the laws of design is, as we have seen, controlled variation (which is another name for sensitive, as opposed to regular, repetition). If no more than the two diagonals of a picture were used, as in rectangle 1 of fig. 48 the relations of parts to them would be so limited that there could be no guide to controlled variation. If a picture rectangle is divided, however, into two, three, or four internal rectangles in both directions, width and length, and diagonals of each of these inner

ones are drawn, then a pattern of diagonals is formed which becomes more intricate and varied as more spaces are used. By such multiplication ample guides would be found to which to relate the forms, lines, and spaces of the picture. In fig. 48 four rectangles are divided as suggested. They may, or may not, be dynamic rectangles. Since the diagonals will have significant relations to each other in either case, and since there are undoubtedly vast numbers of great pictures which are built on diagonal organization even though the outer shape is not dynamic, we will use in this case a non-dynamic, accidental shape. Rectangle no. 2 is divided into two parts each way, no. 3 into three parts, no. 4 into four parts. Each of these different patterns represents what might be called a different tempo. Pictures built into them would be in different keys—the keys of 1,2,3,4.

When a picture is to be tested to see if it is built on one of these key plans, and to find out which one, some experiment is necessary. If a straight edge is laid over a prominent diagonal line of the picture, and then moved across its

surface without changing its slant till it meets a corner, and the spot where it intersects the other side noted, the key may be discovered. If the point of intersection divides that side into two, three, or four equal parts, the corresponding key plan is indicated. If other picture lines, of different directions, tested in the same way, bring the same result, the case is proved. Then, if the picture is consistently organized, every lesser line and shape will conform in direction or placing to the main diagonals or the diagonals of the various equal divisions. Associated lines in the picture will be parallel to different diagonals thus giving controlled variety to eye movement. A bending line, as in drapery, will be parallel to one diagonal, then change direction and be parallel to another. The thrill that comes from this *right* control of the eye is called visual esthetic emotion.

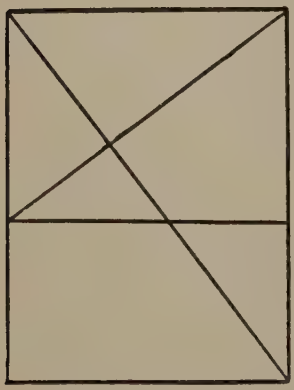


Fig. 47
Test of Sistine Madonna Rectangle

"The Sistine Madonna," by Raphael, fig. 46, is a picture which conforms completely to diagonal organization. Since it is considered one of the world's masterpieces, and is familiar to all, we shall let an analysis of it indicate the process of analysis for all pictures. This painting does not have dynamic proportion, if measurements taken from its photograph are correct. But every item of the design alphabet of Chapter IV and

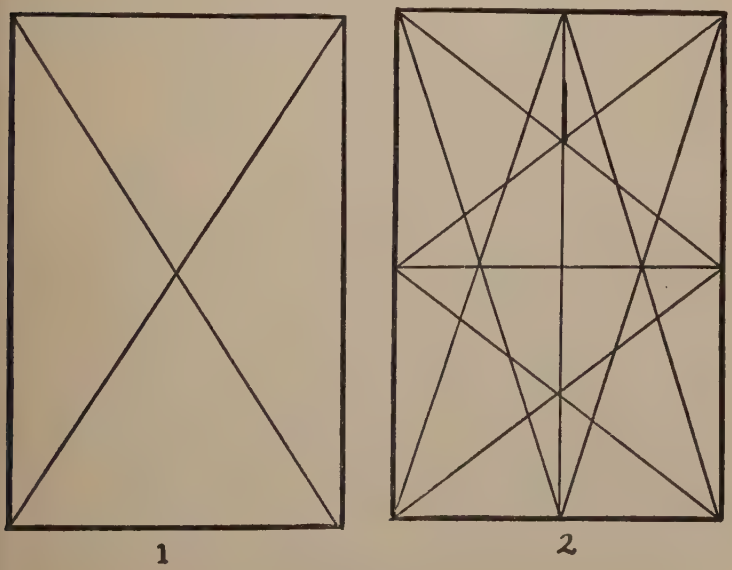
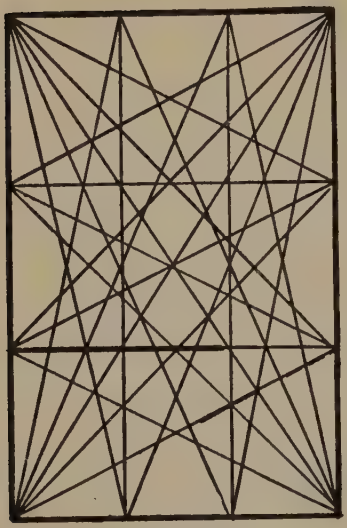


Fig. 48



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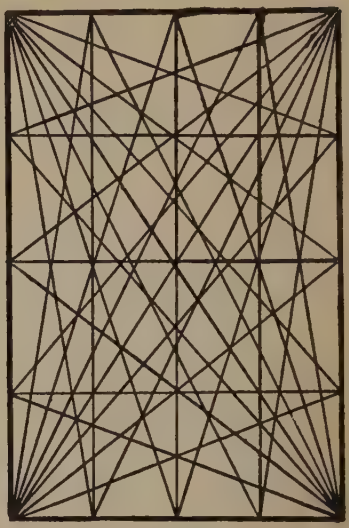


4

every attribute of design discussed in these pages, including the felt nature quality, is carried to supreme fulfillment in it. Careful study of it, and a painstaking search for its secrets, going far enough to include the reader's making his own application of diagonals by drawing them on a reproduction, will unlock sealed doors of the mind—may, in fact, open up a comprehension of the visual elements of all pictorial art.

The straight edge test, indicated above, at

once indicates the key of 4 arrangement in fig. 48. First we will draw, over a rough tracing of

Fig. 49

the main lines of the picture, the main diagonals and the diagonals to the four quarter sections of it. This has been done in fig. 49, with the dotted lines. Note that these dotted lines divide the main picture into four diamond shapes, which, in combination, give the pyramidal arrangement that was so common with the masters, and separately, enclose the heads and shoulders of the three figures. With pieces of paper cover up the surroundings of each diamond shape in succession, so that each may be seen as a separate entity. Note that each is a complete design in itself with satisfying relations of lines and spaces. Note the radiating and flowing curves, the curving angles, the combinations of curving and straight lines. And then note the lines of the composition which are parallel to these main diagonals.

In fig. 50, over the same rough tracing, have been drawn dotted lines dividing the picture into four equal rectangles both ways, and as many of the diagonals of both large and small as are *used* in this sketch. Every line in the picture has a definite relation to some diagonal, the

curved ones conforming in their general direction, while the straight ones either coincide

Fig. 50

exactly, or are exactly parallel. And note how many lines begin or end at the meeting of two diagonals, which is always a visually strategic point, or at their own meeting with a single diagonal. Do these relations seem accidental? Could they happen by chance? Did Raphael use such a plan scheme as here indicated? If one has doubt on this point the best answer will be to apply the same test to a representative picture and compare results.

Here again is the secret of the art of the ages, as it was in the Hopi Indian bird of fig. 36. The differences in the two cases are in the degree of complication, the one primitive simplification, the other sophisticated complication—both true works of art. And the Greek vase of fig. 37 completes the circle—the utmost of sophisticated complication attaining supreme simplicity.

So much explanation establishes the main facts of the application of dynamic symmetry and the diagonal to pictures, both to the border and the picture structure itself. Since farther study would go too deeply into the matter for

FIG. 51

BY TOYOKUNI

Japanese print in which the "felt nature" is expressed through design. The sweeping force of passion is indicated by the sweeping, hurried, lines

any but the artist, we shall leave the discussion here. What has been said will testify to the writer's tested confidence in the theory, and will give, it is hoped, sufficient importance to it to prompt farther investigation. Our purpose, remember, is but to supply the tools.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOMETHING PLUS IN A WORK OF ART

HAVING considered rather carefully that quality in pictures which is probably the most vital contribution of the Modern Movement to the world of art to-day—the quality of organization into design—it now becomes necessary to halt abruptly and take our bearings. For we must view this vein of new experience in relation to its surroundings, keeping a sense of values between it and other veins of related experience. To turn to it unreservedly would certainly be far more thrilling than, for instance, the thinking about the anecdotical content of pictures has been in the past; but, if there is experience beyond this, (and the almost universal love of the old masters is witness that there must be), it will be well to realize and welcome that experience also. What is the "something plus"

then—the something beyond design and beyond the bare literary content of subject matter, which distinguishes the great work of art?

This is, of course, the question which has occupied critics and philosophers as far back in human history, doubtless, as the time when man first began to examine into his own reactions. Many have answered it in many different ways. With the particulars of these answers, since this inquiry is neither historical nor philosophical, we are concerned only in a general way. Some thinkers have interpreted subject matter as an end in itself, or as a means to such ulterior purposes as the imparting of knowledge, or the picturing of good or evil, desiring the artist to be an educator, a missionary, or an historian. Many have recognized design but few have given it more than a very casual importance. Some have spoken of emotions and of the ability of the artist so to express his own as to recreate them in the minds of others. Some—and this division includes many of the representative artists themselves, who fall back on it because they feel the insufficiency of straight representation—

have thought that the expression of the personality of the artist is the end-all of art. Still others have spoken of life, and of the artist as interpreter of nature, and of man to man. And many have built theories of esthetics upon various interpretations of beauty alone, or of beauty and goodness, or of beauty and truth, as a means to spiritual well being. It is easy for us to-day, in looking back over such explanations in the past, and by relying on the extension of our comprehension of all art through the recent discoveries of arts which some fifty years ago were outside the horizon of Occidental society (particularly those of China, Japan, the Aztecs, the African Negro and many primitives), to discard the conclusions of the Ruskins, Tolstoys, and many others, as pitifully limited and entirely obsolete. But there is another angle to the matter. Perhaps art is great enough to mother all these activities of intellect. Perhaps all the writers and thinkers and philosophers and critics have been right in their explanations, or rather, perhaps they have all responded to a stimulus that is fundamental,

universal and unexplainable in works of art—that has moved them all to a strange and more or less conscious ecstasy which they have then interpreted in the light of their own differing personalities. Perhaps art is constant and man variable. Perhaps art is the one great universal language of the human race, timeless and placeless—always understood—never explained. Perhaps the varying explanations have explained the explainers and left art untouched, supremely, serenely omnipotent. Perhaps the thoughts about art have been varying and temporary fashions in which a universal *feeling for art* has been dressed by different individuals and periods, and in which its universality has been more or less obscured.

If this be so—if the thing we call art is so vast in its reach that it can be explained by all explanations at the same time that it is unexplained by any of them, then the most we can do in our attempt at comprehension, is to become as unaware of ourselves as possible, and of the processes which may be at work in us, which determine our relations to works of art, and of the

degree and character of whatever amount of comprehension we do attain. Segregation of the various types of responses which pictures in general arouse, certainly makes us aware of our own particular response to a particular picture and therefore is a step in this direction. And, by becoming aware of the type of our own response, we become capable of valuing it and deciding whence it springs. All Southern Californians take great pride and delight in, and make pilgrimages to, a certain unique group of trees on the southern coast, called the Torrey Pines. Pictures of these trees are correspondingly popular—all types of pictures, from the penny post-card to the hand-colored photograph at five dollars, and the "hand" painting at five hundred. When a lover of the Torrey Pines buys a picture of a Torrey Pine, an excellent opportunity for awareness of processes is furnished. Is it the art quality in the picture (assuming there is one) which tempts his pennies or his dollars? If so he will talk of that and ignore or forget, or treat as a minor matter, the name and location of the trees. Or,

is the picture bought as a reminder of a loved object—as a *proxy* for the tree itself? If so a colored photograph probably is valued above a painting by a genuine artist, for it mirrors the beautiful tree more faithfully. Indeed any art quality in the picture, since it would necessarily, through transformation and transposition, alter the picture's truth to nature, would be considered a marked disadvantage and doubtless cause the rejection of the picture containing it. Awareness, in this case, would locate the source of the love felt for the picture, and identify the response to it. And so awareness of the many possible sources of delight in (or aversion to) pictures, identifies the many possible responses to them and furnishes invaluable data by which any individual may guide his further development.

The value of awareness being rather evident without unassailable proof, we come back to the main question of what it is of which we are to be aware. Design, with its ability to stimulate powerful esthetic emotion, is certainly one vitally important objective. Subject matter, even with its infinite possibilities for shunting interest into

various by-ways and detours remote from art, is, still, an element in pictures of which awareness may well be profitable. The third, and most elusive of all elements, is the "something plus" which is sensed by the great number of serious, inquiring minds which build upon it those theories of esthetics which do not include design as the main constituent fundamental.

This "something plus" has to do with life. It is born of the artist's attempt to express the force underlying all things—the push of the sap upward in spring, the heave and give of muscles, the urge of love to the fusion that means birth of new life, the pull of the love that protects age and infancy. "When Carrière wrests from the matter of the universe a mother giving the breast to her babe, we shall not understand the value of that union if we do not feel that an inner force, love, dictates the bending of the torso and the curve of the mother's arm, and that another inner force, hunger, buries the infant in her bosom." [1]

Henry P. Bowie [2] thus describes Japanese

[1] Élie Faure, *History of Art.* Harper & Bros., N. Y. Introduction to Vol. I.

[2] *On the Laws of Japanese Painting.*

painting, "One of the most important principles in the art of Japanese painting—indeed a fundamental and entirely distinctive characteristic —is that called living movement, SEI DO, it being, so to say, the transfusion into the work of the *felt nature* of the thing to be painted by the artist. Whatever the subject to be translated, whether river or tree, rock or mountain, bird or flower, fish or animal, the artist, at the moment of painting it, must *feel* its very nature, which, by the magic of his art, he transfers into his work to remain forever, affecting all who see it with the same sensations he experienced when executing it." It is by expressing the *felt nature* of a thing, then, that the artist becomes the mouth-piece of the universe of which he is a part and reveals to man, through the "something plus" in a picture, the nature as well as the appearance, of the life and forms about him.

The old masters of Europe, the Chinese and Japanese, the Greeks, the Byzantines, the Assyrians, the African Negro, and many others, throughout history, embodied this felt nature of the thing in their works of art, and it is when,

as in these cases, this divine fire is tempered and controlled by design, that deathless work is born —work which takes its place as part of the universal language of man.

CHAPTER VII

REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION in art means copying, imitating, or mirroring in a work, objects or facts, as they actually appear in nature or human life. It implies concern with detail—the slight, momentary, superficial aspect of things, such as the accidental shadows which reveal form at a particular moment in a particular light. The highest degree of perfection in representation might be assumed to belong to the color-camera, but the representative school of painting, in the works of such of its masters as Meissonier and Gerard Dow, has certainly pressed it to a close finish, matching skill of man against accuracy of machine, until it is hard, in the matter of fidelity to appearance, to award unassailable honors between them.

As a work of art, however, the picture by the representative painter will always have some-

thing the best of the honors, for the man picture-maker can never sink low enough as an artist not to omit, or select, or rearrange to some extent,—a thing which the camera unaided can never do. In other words, the representative artist, even though fidelity to nature be his aim, never reaches absolute representation. Assuming that art lies in the expression of the felt nature of things through organization into design, it is rather obvious that the skillful copying of external appearances, carried to its logical conclusion of absolute representation, is, because it is non-creative, of an entirely different world, one which does not even touch the world of art. But, when the slightest degree of selection or omission enters into the making of a picture, then, undeniably, the art instinct begins to work; and the degree to which these are employed successfully will determine the degree of art achievement in the result.

Straight representation is the very opposite of design. The two cannot exist in the same piece of work, for representation would cease to be

representation, in the strict meaning of the word, as soon as design were brought in. But representation is not necessarily incompatible with composition. In painting a landscape in which a dozen trees appear, a representative painter may select three of the trees, and, omitting the others, place these three on his canvas in positions different from those which they occupy in nature, and then he may proceed to paint these three trees accurately, with all their insignificant as well as significant detail faithfully represented. Or he may apply omission and selection to the details of the trees, and to the clouds and hills. Such a process, which is called composition, is that, in fact, which is used to-day in what is called representative painting, etching, or sculpture. That it requires the use of some of the artist's peculiar powers is evident. But, to one who has experienced the greater thrill of creating design, this little experience, even though it demand great technical skill in the execution, is so tame in comparison, that to indulge in it becomes mere day labor or hack work.

The degrees to which representative picture-making may call on the art instinct are limitless and may range all the way from the zero of photography to the supreme accomplishment of a Rembrandt, the representative quality decreasing as the art quality gains. In the past fifty or seventy-five years, since the art poverty of pure representation has been realized by Occidental artists (if not by the general public), various side-attractions have been depended upon to bolster up the sensed, if not acknowledged, insufficiency. The fact that these side-issues have been featured and exploited as vigorously as they have, is strong evidence that the fundamental insufficiency has been consciously realized. At any rate, whether recourse to them was conscious or unconscious, they have very generally monopolized the approach to art and thus served to distract the attention of picture lovers from the art content in the very pictures of which they were a part.

The *personality* of the artist, as revealed through his particular handling of representation, is one of these side issues, which has been spoken of with the hushed voice of awe and rever-

ence for far too many years. The pushing of omission and selection to the point of *suggesting* facts instead of rendering them faithfully, thereby calling on the imagination of the observer to supply details that are but sketchily indicated, is another that has been a welcome stimulant to interest since the boredom of the documentary statement has been realized. The adventuring of the Impressionists into a new corner of the representative field by their catching and representing the essential quality of light, through the vibratory effect caused by the juxtaposition of broken spots of pure color, was another no less welcome diversion, even if it did arouse the customary howls of protest from the customary conservatives. Choosing of picturesque or poetical subject matter, and placing dependence on its subject interest to cover up lack of creative vitality in the picture itself was, and still is, an almost habitual resource of the hard-pressed representationists, and it charms the easily satisfied to-day as it did fifty and a hundred years ago. Anecdote has served its turn as entertainer, and the pleasure of the millions in *Saturday*

Evening Post covers is evidence of its efficiency to-day, just as Paleolithic cave drawings of daily events of the chase, are evidence of its similar efficiency twenty thousand years ago. (Would that the former had even a fraction of the art quality of some of the latter!) Delineation of character or of moods of nature or of people, the use of sentimental titles, and considerations of technique, have aided the representative artist to stimulate interest in a type of picture which, be-because it is reflecting instead of creating, has been unable to dominate interest through its own inherent quality.

Since the above mentioned types of representative pictures furnish our own immediate background, and since the approach which they demand has become our habitual approach to all pictures, and has more or less completely blinded us to other and greater elements in some pictures, perhaps it will be well to think a little more fully about their character and its effect on us, so that by bringing this effect up from the unconscious to the conscious, we can more easily become aware of the kind of influence and of our response to

it. Then, if we remain subservient to it, we shall do so from choice, not blindly. The qualities here mentioned, remember, are the ones constantly discussed by artists, critics and laymen as being important matters in representative pictures.

PERSONALITY OF THE ARTIST

As if any picture ever made could hide the personality of the artist! It is as much a part of the picture as the paint or canvas or lines. It is built in. It contributes to the result along with all other constituent parts. To single it out for special emphasis is to distract attention from the main issue of what the artist has accomplished with all the tools and building materials at hand. In appraising a cathedral or a Woolworth building one does not consider them as indices of the personality of the architect, one judges the result. The man gives himself to the work and dies. The work, if it is great, endures. The work absorbs the man, as the tree absorbs the sap that gives it life. It

lives in its own right and gives forth again the vitality it has received. The work is what we are concerned with, the personality is an incident —a very minor one; and the heralding of personality implies a consciousness of sterility in greater and more vital content.

SUGGESTION AS A DESIRABLE QUALITY IN PICTURES

Whistler, particularly in his etchings, did much to popularize the suggestive method and there are those among his ardent disciples to-day for whom it still fills the entire horizon of art. How often, in an exhibition of etchings (for etching has inherited a larger portion of suggestive tradition than any other medium) one hears, "Ah! how admirably it suggests—" this or that. "How it stimulates the imagination!" "How subtly he indicates" the texture of a wall or the character of a woman. Suggestion, in a picture, has charm, without question, and because it usually is employed to concentrate interest on some focal point, makes an appeal to the eye

that is agreeable. Indeed a good suggestive picture such as any of those in Whistler's "Venice" set of etchings[1] is a really delightful piece of work which it is a pleasure to have about. But, if the degree and type of pleasure derived from it be compared to the pleasure gained from a picture expressing the felt nature of things through creative design, the result in the observer will be apt to be a reappraisal of pictures that are present day favorites. When one gains the ability to feel the power of design, the pleasant quality of suggestion dwindles into insignificance. This is not saying, however, that it cannot be made use of in a great work of art; only, when so used, it will be subservient to the main purpose in hand—not thrust to the head of the procession for its own minor merits.

THE IMPRESSIONISTS AS THE GRAND REBELS OF REPRESENTATION

The Impressionists made a great commotion for a time, which was for the good of the cause.

[1] Test any one of these etchings for design by turning it upside down and see what a meaningless jumble it becomes.

But it was not too many years before it was realized that they were as strictly representative as those who had gone before. Only, instead of representing grapes so skillfully that the sparrows pecked the canvas, the Impressionists represented light so admirably that it vibrated before the eyes. They gave representation no more than a temporary vitality. With the dwindling of Impressionism into its true perspective as a step in progress toward the real revolution which followed it, i. e. Post-Impressionism, or the Modern Movement, disappeared the prestige of representation as a possible means to significant achievement in art. The fact that some millions of laymen and thousands of artists have not yet learned that representation, as a means to art, died with the Nineteenth Century does not alter the record but must be laid to insufficient means of communication. Twenty-four years, it seems, is not time enough for the radio, the press, the telegraph, the pulpit, and the lecture to get such news from Paris and distribute it throughout America.

USE OF PICTURESQUE OR POETICAL SUBJECT MATTER AS A DESIRABLE QUALITY IN PICTURES

Shifting the burden of creation from the artist, where it belongs, to nature, where it has nothing to do with art, is what this process might be called. It is a lazy man's way out. Essentially, it is as if one should pick a beautiful shell from the beach and skillfully paint a near replica of it, and then hold this up to the admiring gaze of the multitudes, who had blindly tramped the original into the sand. The artist has "revealed" to the ignorant a beauty of nature to which they were before more or less blind.[2] The ignorant then become enthusiastic over the freshly discovered beauty, admiring nature's creation, but mixing the artist up in the matter and donating to him considerable of the credit which should, by rights, belong to God. The following words of Whistler, taken from his "Ten

[2] See the letter, quoted in appendix under *Beauty and Art*, from the head of an art organization as evidence of the acceptance of such a revelation as the proper function of the artist.

O'Clock,"[3] are illuminating in this connection.

"And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall buildings become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure cease to understand as they have ceased to see and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone."

This is a vivid word-painting of an artist's sensitive response to the poetic beauty of nature. But this veiled mystery is a fact in nature, just as a pumpkin or warehouses in daylight are facts, and can be copied in a picture for its own poetic charm, or can be used by the artist to create charm which springs from his creation. A representative painter, keenly feeling the beauty, as Whistler

[3] And quoted by Charles Marriott (*Modern Movements in Painting:* Chapman & Hall, London, 1920) in his able analysis of the work of Whistler.

does, would copy the dim scene on canvas, trying to record it so faithfully that his picture would arouse the same emotion in the "blind" wise man that nature aroused in him. In other words he would employ his skill to reveal the beauty of twilight to the ignorant, and *would attempt no more than this.* The creative artist would never be satisfied with such an achievement. Instead of depending on the transforming twilight to create a poetic illusion for him, he would prefer to look at the warehouses in daylight and himself do whatever transforming was necessary to create his own illusion, suited to his own purposes. Instead of being an interpreter he would wish to be a creator.

All that has just been said applies equally to the element of the picturesque. For many years this quality has been a main resource of representative etchers. Old tumble-down structures and smoky scenes of industry make perfect etching subjects and have been copied by the thousand. Aged buildings of the Continent have been especially favored in this respect until even juries composed of representative etchers, wearied by

the flood, have been known to remark (unofficially) that they wished there were fewer prints of old buildings.

ANECDOTE AS AN ATTRACTION IN REPRESENTATIVE PICTURES

A caution is necessary here. In discussing the anecdotical content of pictures, it is particularly necessary to stop and consider whether such matter is used for its own sake alone, or whether it is used as material for design. Most of the great masterpieces of the world are more or less anecdotical in character, relating incidents in private or royal or religious life, but, in them, the momentary anecdote is universalized by art with a resultant power so tremendous in itself that the story may be forgotten without consciousness of loss. But take the anecdote from a *Saturday Evening Post* cover and what is left? Skill and a mite of colored ink. And so all the attributes of representative pictures here mentioned, could be vitalized by the magic wand of art into deathless entities. It is only when they lack that

touch that they remain matters of temporary entertainment—nonentities of art.

TECHNIQUE AS A QUALITY TO BE FEATURED

Excellent technique, in any picture, as in any work of art, should be taken for granted as a matter-of-course necessity. Until an artist has mastered his technique, his works, even if they have true art quality in them, should be thought of as studies and experiments, and should not be presented in public exhibition unless for their historical interest as records of his development. This axiom applies with particular force to those embryo moderns who have not yet found themselves, and to the imitators and fakers of the superficial qualities of the true movement, who see, in the breakdown of the older tradition, only a chance to foist vulgarity and crudity, or their own immaturity, on a bewildered public. Such work is worse than negligible. It is an offence and should receive no mercy from critics or individuals of the public when once they detect its pretensions. The representative school stands

for excellence and mastery of technique, and since, in far too many cases, this is about all of value that its pictures contain, it should receive full appreciation for it. Only, it should be borne in mind that mastery of technique is a self-forged tool with which a work of art is built, never has it any of the blood of art in its veins.

USE OF SENTIMENTAL TITLES AS A MEANS OF SUPPLYING A FICTITIOUS INTEREST IN PICTURES

A considerable number of representative artists, having learned from experience that their pictures must illustrate some thought in order to bolster up interest and appeal to public and buyers, have found that it is much easier to put the desired thought into the words of the title than into the picture itself, and that the charm works perfectly with this method. Since most observers and buyers look at a picture with their brains instead of their eyes, they relish a title that tells the whole story and thus saves all visual labor. An idea, once lodged in the mind by words, quite easily and automatically is imagined to exist in the picture. The message

has arrived via the title; the picture, though it has had nothing to do with the process, gets the credit and everybody is happy. Take such a title as this:

"Smooth lakes where coyest wild-fowl whir"

Everyone likes to hear *"wild-fowl whir"* and "coy" wild-fowl! Memories of wild whirrings (if not of coy ones) rise in the mind of the reader of this title, and, when he glances at the attached picture, any spot of yellow ochre will "whir coyly" before his enchanted eyes. As a matter of fact the picture probably will begin to whir coyly before he even looks in its general direction. Or take this one:

"What gnawing thought, O ever-moaning sea,
Haunts thy perturbed breast."

But further comment is unnecessary.[4] "The song of the Lark," fig. 56 is another example of a sentimental title (and picture).

[4] The writer takes oath that these are actual titles taken from a printed catalogue of paintings. He could not have invented them.

DELINEATION OF CHARACTER AND OF MOODS OF NATURE OR PEOPLE AS QUALITIES OF REPRESENTATIVE PICTURES

Here is need for the fullest power of discrimination. For the portrayal of character, or moods, or emotions, must spring from some degree of feeling for the basic nature of things. It is conceivable that a representative and creative artist both might experience identical consciousness of the inner reality of a human being, or of a storm, or an emotion. They might both allow the inner significance to permeate their entire beings; both might come to their work, after careful study of their subject, with a sense of suppressed power crying for expression. But, from the first laying of brush to canvas, all similarity in their mental states and in methods of approach would cease; from that instant their processes would be diametrically opposed. To understand more clearly the difference between them, it will be necessary to digress for a moment and realize the two possible types of artist vision.

CHARLES SHEELER
FIG. 52

FIG. 53

JUDSON D. SMITH

The boat design by Sheeler is a superb example of semi-abstract arrangement of curving forms and lines, with classic simplicity. The lower by Smith is a highly complicated arrangement of a multitude of small forms. Note repetition of curtain folds in table leg, abstract arrangement of window panels, and the play of forms and lines with each other throughout.

PERCEPTUAL AND CONCEPTIONAL VISION

The kind of vision described in Chapter III, under the name of *pure vision,* perceives objects as ends in themselves, stripped of all associated facts and ideas. It is called *perceiving* or *perceptual vision.* As stated before, it observes accurately and can be used by both the representative and creative artist. The former uses it to observe facts which he then records in his picture. A child once defined drawing [5] by saying, "I think, then I draw a line around my think." This looking inward, seeing the image or concept of an object registered on the mind's eye, as it were, instead of the object itself, is called *conceptual vision.* The creative artist uses perceptual vision to collect data which he stores in his mind and later uses as material for his inward-looking conceptual vision, to build into design. To return now to the two types of artists.

The representative artist, all primed to deline-

[5] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design.* Brentano's, N. Y., 1920.

ate a certain human character or emotion, comes to his work, having used, and ready to use, perceptual vision. He poses a model to express, let us say, sorrow. He studies that model carefully, observing the drooping bend of the back, and begins to draw. He draws the significant bend of the back. He draws the bent arm. He comes to the elbow. Here is a wrinkle in the coat sleeve. Shall he draw that wrinkle? It is there, plainly to be seen. A wrinkle must exist in a coat sleeve even if that sleeve expresses sorrow. He draws the wrinkle. Then other details intrude. Some he omits, but many decisions must be made. He becomes occupied with drawing correctly. After a bit he is drawing freshly-shined patent-leather shoes. Suddenly he realizes his whole concern is with these glossy shoes—that he has forgotten all about sorrow. He tries to recapture his original fire, but original fire has a delicate constitution and dies easily of neglect. And even if he does recapture it, the process repeats itself. When finished, the picture records faithfully the external manifestations of sorrow, and probably

reflects some of the inner quality. Certainly it furnishes ample data by which the observer may recognize the existence of sorrow, but the record is one of a *particular sorrow* in a particular person, sitting in a particular light in a particular room.

The creative artist works differently. As a composer, at a piano, creates harmony while gazing into space, so the creative artist begins to draw with his conceptual vision turned inward searching the storehouse of his mind. That storehouse is well stocked for he has made preliminary studies in plenty—probably has drawn a model accurately in order to possess himself of all knowledge of details. And now he is ready to use his material—to create a picture. The inner fire burns. He comes to his canvas filled with a suppressed power that urges hands to vital, swinging, expression. Does he feel the bending weight of sorrow? His hand flows the bend of sorrow into line. No thought of detail, hardly a glance at the model. The *feel* of sorrow flowing into form! His problem becomes one of controlling the exuberance of spirit, of holding it to the slow, laborious process of organi-

zation, of conserving the force in him to hour after hour, and day after day, and week after week, perhaps, of controlled release. And when the day is done, he drops exhausted—an empty flagon from which the wine is drained. What was in him has gone into the work, where, if his power has been great enough, it will live forever. Thus is the felt nature of a thing eternalized into design.

Representation, therefore, may be more or less decked out with a number of interesting qualities, such as personality, suggestion, poetical subject matter, etc., which serve to color a type of work that would be as dry, in its strict application, as an inventory of merchandise. But, even in such gay attire, its essential function remains that of recording the particular, and this very characteristic, inherent in it, predestines it to a rôle of temporary and relatively insignificant service. Already this rôle is generally recognized and admitted in the world of art, and will be universally so recognized certainly in a very few decades. No. Perhaps not. Through all the history of man, there has been a majority that

FIG. 54

A partial abstraction by Walter Ufer. Note the control of eye movement by the many lines and forms that focus on the small white house between the two large ones. Note also that the exaggerated movements obtained by this abstraction emphasize, and give variety to, this eye control, and therefore enrich the contribution of the artist.

FIG. 55

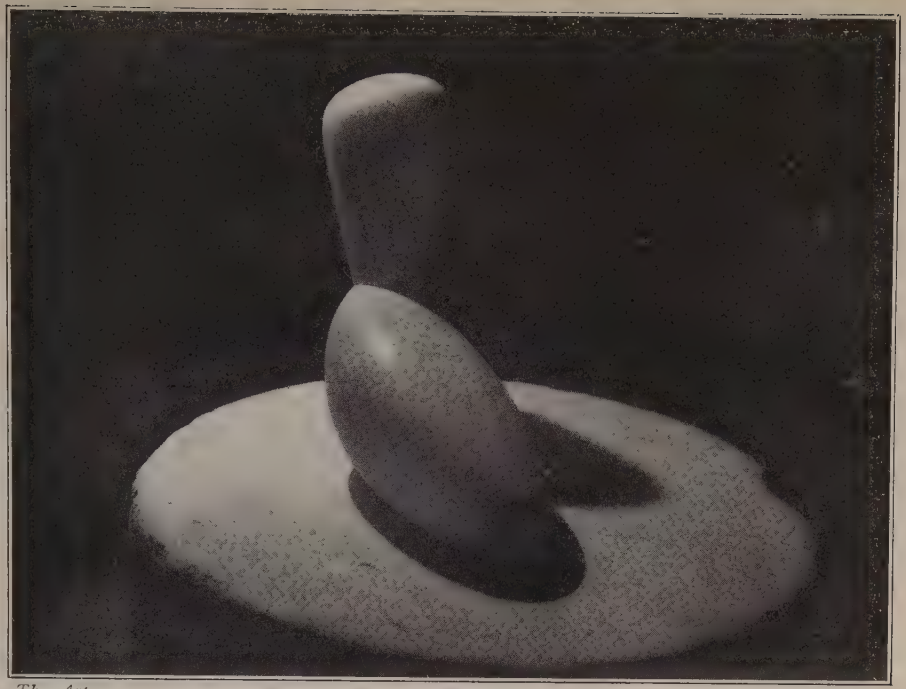
An etching by the author in which mountains have been treated as simplified forms in an attempt to organize their bulk-weight quality into design.

delights in the particular, and probably it is safe to guess that the majority will continue to do so till the end of human time. As a representative painter once said to a "modern" visiting his city, "Go to it, Old Boy. Show your work and get all the publicity you can. I'm not afraid of your getting my public away from me."—He knew.

The foregoing indicates, in a general way, the character of some of the main side-issues in representative pictures and attempts to estimate their value as contributions from the artist. Just a word about the responses they stimulate in the observer.

The personality of the maker of a picture may provide a most interesting study, involving psychology, heredity, neurology or whatnot, but it certainly has nothing to do with art, even in the narrow sense in which the word is used by the representationists. Suggestion in a picture stimulates the imagination, indeed, and such an operation has undoubted value—but to what does it stimulate? To the task of completing an unfinished inventory of facts—which is hardly an art activity. And, if it goes beyond this and

aims to stimulate to a seeing or feeling of inner qualities, as in the case, for instance, of a representative portrait which might feature the "burning" eyes and subordinate the rest of head and body into sketchy indications, it, even then, is only directing forcefully the research of the observer into humanistic matters which are still extraneous to art. Impressionism, perhaps, did make a real and valuable contribution to the observer, for it taught him the fallibility of his own eyesight and that things *are* what they *do not seem.* Directing attention to, and forcing the recognition of, picturesque or poetical subject matter, to which in nature the layman had been blind, also has a value, in that it again extends the range of vision. But such value is educational. It helps to prepare for the appreciation of works of art; it does not, since its concern is with beauty of subject, provide art quality to be appreciated. Anecdote, without art quality imposed on it, amuses, but never thrills, a spectator. And delineation of character, or moods, or emotions, and the featuring of technique, all of them shunt interest on to a sidetrack where it



The Arts

FIG. 56

BRANCUSI

Here is an expression of simplified form that compares in its unformal classicism to the formal classicism of a Greek vase, though it has not, of course, the dynamic symmetry quality of the latter.

FIG. 57
BRUNO KRAUSKOPF

FIG. 58
ADOLF RIEDLIN

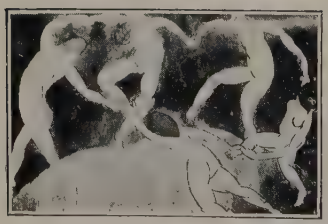


FIG. 59
MATISSE

FIG. 60
ERIC J. SMITH

Examples in which design has been imposed on reluctant material with partial abstraction or distortion for the purposes of design. Incidentally they all express the felt nature of their subjects, and the caricature by Smith is probably the most obvious example in this book of a picture built on the laws of the diagonal.

may have a delightful time—and forget all about the main trunk line of art.

If this analysis of representation is fair, and the desire has been to make it so, then its net result is this:

Because it is particular instead of universal, and because the side-attractions which it calls to its banner have no blood-relationship to art, the sum total of the contribution which representation in pictures makes to the observer, is *entertainment* and *information* in various matters outside of art, and a *partial education in vision.* It is this general type of work which is distinguished by the term *romanticism,* and belongs to the romantic school of art. It is so called to distinguish it from classicism and the classic school, which we shall consider in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

CLASSICISM

THERE are two ways in which design may be applied to the subject matter of a picture.

One is by making the demands of the design paramount to all other considerations, carrying the conventionalization or distortion of subject matter to any extreme to meet that need—even to the forfeiting of all resemblance to nature. This method leads to the partial or complete abstraction utilized by the Cubists, and, since, in the history of art, its use in pictures (as distinct from decorative design) has been very rare, it may almost be said to be, in that field, a discovery of the moderns. The other method by which design may be applied is by "imposing it on reluctant material" [1] without distortion. A

[1] This vigorous phrase belongs to my friend Jerome N. Frank.

human head is reluctant material, as is a mountain, a group of pots and pans, or a crucifixion. It is this method of imposing design on objects and relations of objects in nature, while employing only as much abstraction as is imperative in order to achieve universalization, which arrives at classicism in a work of art. It has been employed in all ages and places where classic work has been produced.

What is classic art? All that has been written so far is an answer to that question. At the end of Chapter VI this answer was summed up in the statement that when the expression of the felt nature of things is tempered and controlled by design, deathless work is born—work which takes its place as part of the universal language of man. Classic art is certainly that—deathless and universal. That it is arrived at through conceptual vision, and feeling the nature of things on the part of the artist, and through a certain amount of stylization or abstraction; that it is creative rather than imitative, that it always has a structural design comparable to that of music or architecture, that in its very highest

manifestation this design depends on the laws of the diagonal and of dynamic symmetry—all these qualities seem so obvious as to make further discussion of them needless. And yet lecturers and critics on every hand are telling of a hundred other interesting matters and ignoring these. Intuition? Is that the means to an answer? Perhaps. But intuition works in established grooves and must be freed from the handicap of preconceived ideas. Take a particular case for a moment and consider how it must be treated by the artist in order to reach classic expression.

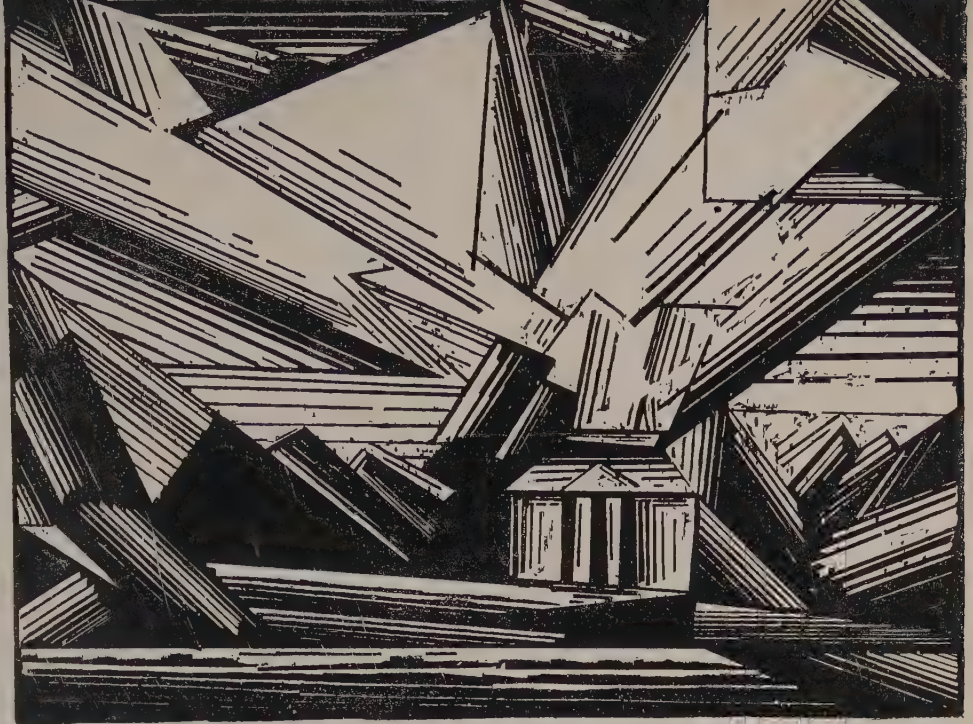
A mountain is a vast hulk of rock whose surface is furrowed and scarred, and partially dressed in a patch-work covering of foliage. In picturing a mountain, representation records the visible details which belong to the husk; while creative design, in searching for inner realities, is more concerned with the bulk and huge weight, which is sensed, rather than seen, under the husk. But the patch-work surface and the bulk-weight are both important characteristics of mountains. Both may be represented in a picture. Representation of the former can be obtained by straight,

simple copying of appearances, whereas representation of the latter must rather obviously depend upon, first feeling the nature of the thing, then so presenting it in a picture that this felt nature, or vast weight, is sensed by the observer. To convey such a sense of inner weight the mountain must be drawn in a way that features this quality. Since surface details have nothing to do with bulk, but only with the outer plane to which they belong, they must be sacrificed to any method which portrays the inner quality. Such a method is the reducing of the mountain to its essential geometric form of cone or pyramid, or to some variation of these. But when surface is thus ignored, or altered, *abstraction* begins, for the slightest departure from visual truth to nature is the beginning of abstraction. A picture of a house, skillfully painted by a representative painter, who might decry the abstraction of a cubist as a monstrosity, is yet, in itself a partial abstraction, for it is not an absolutely accurate image of the house. And when one quality is to be emphasized at the expense of other qualities, as in the case of the weight of the mountain, ab-

straction in some degree is the only method by which this result may be gained. Creative design in picture making then, since it goes further than representation in recording the inner quality of things, must gain its end through a greater use of abstraction.

When it is realized that some abstraction exists in the most skillful of representative pictures, then a slightly greater degree of it than is conventionally accepted at the moment as proper, will not be so offensive to the picture lover as it may be otherwise. Indeed complete abstraction can then be looked on, and even welcomed, as an interesting experiment in which the laws of design function exactly as they do in a Raphael Madonna. And the partial degree of abstraction necessary to a forceful presentation of inner realities will be assumed as one of the essential resources of the artist.

The necessity and advisability of relying on some degree of abstraction in order to present the inner reality of things (as well as to attain expression through design) is not so hard to understand if one can open one's mind and eyes



Weyhe Gallery

FIG. 61

A complete abstraction by Lyonel Feininger, that gives a powerful control of eye movement. This should be studied long and carefully till the importance of shapes and lines and values are visually comprehended—which does not happen in a casual glance.

The Arts

FIG. 62

A Cubist complete abstraction by Picasso.

to actualities, rather than confine them to beliefs. Those experiments in drawing the pail and comparing the white paper to the black automobile, described in Chapter II, prove that knowing and seeing are two very different functions that may cause one to deduce diametrically opposed conclusions from the same data. Recognition of this proven fact, (and the experiments certainly do prove it beyond dispute), should make a layman very modest about his ability to decide what are realities in nature or art. It should give him much of the uncertainity in the field of art or visible nature that he now feels, and readily admits, in fields of science and learning. It should send him to the artist with the same respect for his specialized knowledge that he now has for the specialized knowledge of the lawyer, doctor, or scientist. Abstraction beyond familiar limits offends to-day the layman and the artist of the representative school. Yet it is a necessity, if either inner reality or design is to be incorporated into a picture. If a work of art cannot be a work of art without employing abstraction, then comprehension of

works of art is impossible without its acceptance. And when this is once admitted, as has been said, then the degree of abstraction is of minor importance.

In the complete abstraction method of applying design to pictures the artist's problem is greatly simplified since the design organization is all he need concern himself with. Heretofore this method obtained only in two dimensional design for decorative purposes. The Cubists, headed by Picasso, carried it over into three dimensions and applied it to pictures. By doing this they gained a complete release of their powers from the habitual limitation to faithfulness in representing the superficial appearances of things (a release which is unbelievably hard for an artist, trained in the representative school, to attain). This release meant freedom for invention, freedom to jump all restraining walls and hurl their trained abilities into pure creation, controlled only by the laws of design. These laws were so instinctive to these men, however, because of their years of discipline that they never thwarted the eager hand, but only guided

it subconsciously. This release and call to invention was the great contribution of Cubism to Twentieth Century art. The artists, having once mastered it and exercised dormant creative abilities, as dormant muscles are exercised in a gymnasium, found themselves quite naturally more fit for creation again within set limitations.[2] Such limitations are imposed by the classic approach—by the necessity of portraying the inner realities. Pure abstraction is therefore, if our argument holds, a preparation for classicism—both from the point of view of the maker and observer of pictures.

Other elements of design which contribute to classicism have been elaborated elsewhere. Ab-

[2] Most of them have used Cubism as a phase of their development and to-day are applying their resultant freshened vision to a more traditional production. The abstract works (both complete and partial abstractions) produced by Cubism are certainly of great value to the layman, as well as to all artists, for, by reducing pictures to the sole function of creating esthetic emotion through the medium of organized visual elements, they simplified the problem of apprehending design—of seeing pictures as visual ends. It is only a proof of the general inability to see design that Cubist paintings have been so widely misunderstood and damned. When really seen (the genuine ones, of course,) they can only be warmly appreciated. It is to be hoped, because of their stimulative value, that the principles back of Cubism will soon become an important stage in all art training.

straction seems to be the root through which these others are able to assimilate the vitality of the artist, and therefore it is, perhaps, the most important single element. The non-visual qualities—that is, the humanistic source of the urge to expression, and of the interpretation of man to man—with all their ramifications in social, political, historical, religious, and economic conditions, are outside our field of inquiry, except as they come under the "felt nature" heading, although their importance in their own fields need never be forgotten.[3]

To some people the word *classic* refers back to the Greek art of the golden age and nowhere else. But this limitation in its application has been revised during the past fifty years as the enlargement of our horizon has progressed and corresponding new valuations have been applied. If we accept the definition of classicism here suggested, we must realize that there have been other classic periods in the history of Europe as well as in the history of many other civili-

[3] For this side of art as well as for the esthetic side, a book could hardly be more valuable than is Élie Faure's *History of Art*, Harper & Bros., 1921.

Bourgois gallery

FIG. 63
MAURICE STERNE

Here is a modern work that has attained real classic quality. There is the felt nature of the woman universalized into design. If the result does not show the maturity of a Holbein or the Seurat or Daumier of Figs. 54 and 55 it does show at once that it is built on the same laws.

The Arts

FIG. 64

GEORGES SEURAT

This and the two following pictures conform to the definition of classicism here presented. This and the Daumier are obviously built on the laws of the diagonal and are masterly realizations of all classic elements.

zations. Comprehension of classic qualities allows instant recognition of classic art wherever it is found, and however much it may be qualified by the individual traditions of a particular age and race. Thus, among examples of modern work, a Seurat "Young Woman at her Powder-box" (fig. 64), or a Joseph Bernard (fig. 66), or a Renoir, (fig. 70), or a Brancusi (fig. 56), all obviously spell classicism in their different styles as does the East Indian mediæval carving fig. 69, or the Chinese statuette of fig. 68; the British Columbian house-post, fig. 1, the Assyrian lion, fig. 15; and to come back to our own line of descent, the Daumier of fig. 65, the Raphael of fig. 46, beside endless others. It is no reflection of the classic Greek that is sensed in these widely diverse works; it is the fact that they are built on universal laws, that proves their right to the classic title. Differences in degree of mastery of these laws stand as just that—and may not bar the least of them from full appreciation of that inherent quality in them which makes them significant, *classic* works of art.

CHAPTER IX

CRITICISM AND THE STANDARD

THE function of the critic is that of a guide. He comes to a bewildered, confused, poorly informed public, beaten this way and that by the voice of every clamorer for attention, by prejudice crying its favorites, by commercialism exploiting craftily for profit, by sincere, misplaced enthusiasm proclaiming mediocrity, by the works of new schools that contradict the works of old; on every hand he finds the individuals which make up the public helplessly, almost hopelessly, muddled. What a tremendous opportunity here awaits him! What a privilege to guide in orderly progress through the intricacies of the maze, pointing out the sights to be seen, analyzing their character, affiliations, pedigree, aspiration, and, as he sees it, their degrees of accomplishment! To bring order out of confusion, to help to discrimination, to achieve comprehension!

The Arts

FIG. 65

DAUMIER

FIG. 66
JOSEPH BERNARD

Surely here is a position of responsibility and honor, to be looked on with respect, to be prepared for religiously, to be undertaken seriously and only after maturity of experience has allowed the attainment of a universal standard.

The standard is the back-bone of criticism. By it the works discussed are measured. By it alone are comparisons and placements, and, in fact, judgments of any kind made possible. The comprehensiveness of the standard determines the comprehensiveness of the criticism. If it is limited to a particular point of view, then the criticism is sufficient only within that limited scope. When it is universal, then only can the criticism have universal applications. The standard, then, is the main equipment of the critic, and, in conjunction with such other necessary equipment as sensitiveness to esthetic qualities, knowledge of technical problems, power of logical analysis, and familiarity with history both within and without his special field, gives him the power to be conscious of the comparative significance of his own reactions to the works he wishes to criticize and then to interpret these

reactions in an orderly manner for the guidance of others. When he is sure that his standard is universal—that it is big enough to mother all the greatest works of all time, he may readily admit the uncertainty of the personal equation in his application of that standard to any given work. But, even though the very comprehensiveness of his vision causes him to feel and express doubt of his own infallibility in making applications, yet, because of the stability given him by his great standard, every one of his conclusions (assuming unfailing honesty in reporting them) will have value to his audience. Every one will help to produce a state of awareness of the character of an individual's own reactions, and of new qualities whose presence and importance were not even guessed.

In the field of pictorial art, the profession of criticism, like other professions in other fields, is honored by a pitifully small number of critics with the universal vision, and more or less unconsciously betrayed by a concourse without it. And since the few are so few, they are limited to the relatively small audience that searches out

Greek

Fragment from Gozzoli

Fig. 67

Chinese Tehua

Fig. 68

Examples in which design has been imposed on nature without distortion, but with sufficient abstraction to meet the needs of the artist. These are classic works fulfilling the requirements of great art. The Chinese Tehua is a supreme example of the felt nature plus design. The rectangle containing the Greek figure is of dynamic symmetry proportions, and the figure and drapery a superb example of organized curves. The Gozzoli shows design imposed on landscape, particularly on rocks and trees. The Indian carving, fig. 69, is built on the laws of the diagonal.

FIG. 69

MEDIÆVAL EAST INDIAN

the high quality publications in which, alone, their criticisms appear. The very universality of their vision places them far enough ahead of their times and causes them to be objects of enough suspicion, to prevent their words reaching the public which needs them most.[1] The public is at the mercy of the hordes of near-critics with particular standards, or no standards but their own personal taste, who tickle the intellect with side-issue discussions, or the fancy with flowery gush.[2] These have ready admission to print,

[1] For instance, the "popular" magazines, with their policy of pleasing the public to get its money, would not publish such criticism on the ground that it would not be popular. In its issue of January 1923, the *Ladies' Home Journal* published an article on the "Crime Wave in Art" by Oliver Herford. In a four thousand word attempt to discredit the Modern Movement with ridicule, this article thoroughly disclosed Mr. Herford's own insensibility to the design principles that are basic in all art except the representative type, which is his standard. While to the informed reader his article only discredited Mr. Herford, to the public it could only add to the confusion. The editors, later, refused to publish an answer to it, which was a constructive explanation, on the ground that it "was more for the class-room than for a popular magazine." The idea evidently was that ridicule is good reading whereas explanation is too heavy. One cannot quarrel with the editors, of course, for conforming to what they consider a wise business policy but it is well to know, when one reads the magazine, what the policy is that determines the selection of the material there presented.

[2] Examples of flowery gush by art critic. "From the portraiture

in magazines, exhibition catalogues and books. Their particular points of view are popular because the public, by its present satisfaction with the little side-issue field of representation, is eminently particular in its point of view. And so they amuse, or explore a circle within a circle, but have no plan for the whole labyrinth, and the net result of all their activity is to stimulate, and add to—confusion.

Within the great conglomerate mass of the "Public," however, are many who really care to understand works of art. They read the printed words of critics, or listen to lectures, or go on gallery tours, hoping to solve the riddle, hoping to find the magic key, hoping to find out what art is really about. What are such earnest ones to do? How are they to know whom to believe—whom to follow?

So far as the writer has been able to answer this question, after fifteen years of watching the

of beautiful women to the portrayal of beautiful flowers is but a step, and, as the portraits give forth that intangible something of the soul of the sitter, so the flowers bring to us the perfumes of Arcady. . . . An even lovelier picture is 'Memories,' a wistful, tender, exquisitely painted beautiful woman, who does indeed reveal her soul to us."

prevailing misconnection between public and works of art, there is but one possible method. And that is this:—to grab out of the air, or arrive at by reason, or intuition, or whatever means offers, some rudimentary realization of a universal quality in all works of art, and then, using this one fact as a test rod, to measure with it, the offered teachings. One's reasoning might run like this: "In all great works of art of the past, regardless of when or where, there is something common to all. It is not connected with subject or story, for differences of subject and story are infinite. It is not technique, for differences of technique are limitless also. If none of the tangible elements are universal, and yet there is some universal quality, then that quality can only lie in the method of arriving at tangible results. In the case of pictures the methods of arriving at results are visual and have to do with the kind and quality and relation to each other of lines, spaces, forms, and colors. There is a strong likelihood, then, that the universal quality lies in the *how it is done*—in the relationship of elements, which is called *design*. Ergo, I shall

listen to those critics of art who talk of a universal quality (which they will call "design," the "grand tradition," "significant form," or "classicism"), and who connect this quality with universal relationships. From such I may learn the secret. From those who talk of particular contents I may learn many other things—but never the secret of the inner shrine." In other words, an individual, if he wishes to get anywhere in an understanding of art, must build his own standard and then have the courage to apply it—first, by criticising the critics and judging the judges, in order to choose the right guidance; second, by striving toward independent judgment, with modesty, perhaps, and considerable reliance on the trusted teaching—but without losing sight of his goal.

These pages have been an attempt to outline such a standard in a way that would help the reader to learn how to see modern pictures, or any pictures—to gain the power of discrimination necessary to courageous judgment and action in matters of art.

We found, in the preceding chapters, that the

type of vision called pure vision is the type with which we see the space relations of both applied and pictorial design. If we realize that the power of using this type of vision has been lost, to a large extent to-day, and then realize that this general loss probably means an individual loss covering our own case, and, if we then make the effort necessary to exercise it, (the fact that it can be exercised at will proves that it is dormant, not permanently lost) we shall have made, by that process, a first big step toward achieving a personal standard. Sensing the right relations of lines, spaces, forms, textures and colors is then the next big step, the attainment of which can be reached, let us believe, by familiarity with, and study of, right examples. There are certain examples at hand which are known to be right. Among them are the Greek and Egyptian classics, Japanese prints, the work of the old masters such as Dürer, Tintoretto, Raphael, Titian, Holbein, El Greco, the wall carvings of Assyria, the sculptures of old Mexico. Familiarity with the relations of visual elements in such work, arrived at through the use of pure vision and the

elimination from consideration of all extraneous elements, will certainly develop the ability to recognize right relations wherever they are seen. When these two important steps are taken three fourths of the problem is solved. Sensing the "something plus" in a work of art, the expression of the felt nature, or inner reality of a thing, and accepting complete or partial abstraction as the only possible means to such expression, constitutes the other quarter of the problem. When these important steps are taken we have made our own the essential elements of a universal standard.

Achieving this standard in some degree is possible for anyone who cares to think and act seriously on the interesting problem. Partial achievement means partial power; supreme achievement, supreme power. Given a standard large enough to include all works of visual art of all ages, and a sensitive application of that standard, then the opinion of every serious individual about works of art, commands respect. It may be vulnerable to attack. What matter? It commands serious attention and respect be-

cause it records the esthetic emotional reaction of a human soul to a work of art. And among such reactions (provided they are true ones) there are no aristocrats—no authorities. The universal language has conveyed a feeling from man to man across the ages, or across a city, or a room. The recipient of the emotion is kin to all men and all women of all human time who have likewise received the "message" of an artist. He or she knows a sense of elation—of power. There is no doubt, or fear, or confusion, only the poise that comes of vital experience. The writer wishes to emphasize this point with all the power at his command. Given the ability to experience esthetic emotion from a visual work of art, the responses of the Italian section-hand, of the country school teacher, of the timid Texas ranch wife, of the art student, are exactly as valid—as important in every way—as worthy of respect—as are the responses of the critic, the museum director, the art editor, the college president. (Respect for the expression in words of such reactions is another matter and should go easily to the critic. We are

speaking now of the value of the response, as such.) In this twenty-fifth year of the Twentieth Century the ability to experience this emotion is a very rare attainment. In every hundred thousand of population there may be ten people with the ability consciously developed, an unknown number in whom it is unconscious or intuitive, a vast majority in whom it is possible of development. The ten furnish the present audience of the creative artist—the others his future, potential audience. The point is this. Among the ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety who do not, at present, consciously understand the meaning of visual esthetic emotion, are many so-called artists, art critics, college presidents, museum directors, and art editors. Among those who do know its meaning are simple, isolated modest souls who claim no distinction because of their gift. These last make their own judgments of works of art, instantly recognize the art quality wherever they see it, and smile with amusement at the side-issue discussions or airy persiflage of blind authorities and critics, or at gold medal awards to skillful

FIG. 70

RENOIR

A modern classic of great visual significance. It is an example of thoroughly organized three dimensional design—and is built on the same key of four scheme of diagonals as the Sistine Madonna of Fig. 46.

FIG. 71

A modern picture which tells its story powerfully, and is organized into design. From the painting by Erich Waske, contemporary German.

If magazine and book illustrations were built into designs, as this picture is, every one of them would be a work of art worthy of preservation, exhibition in art museums, and respect. The art would make valuable the presentation of the idea. Illustration that lacks the art has but a momentary and purely illustrative (in an intellectual sense) value. It is a document.

FIG. 73

FIG. 74

FIG. 75

mediocrity. The power they know gives confidence and quiet authority. It is this power, gained in this way, that gives the courage to form individual judgments and courage to live up to them. It is this power that *is* the extension of experience, made possible for us to-day by the Modern Movement in the visual arts. It is this power that is available in some degree to any individual who cares to gain it, and it is this power, once gained, that makes its possessor a force in matters of art,—a force in the world of art. For discriminating judgment means discriminating purchase. And discriminating purchase, by its selection of significant work, shares the burden of creation with the artist and thus gives the layman his only possible opportunity of participating in the production of those works which will be the valued heritage of our age to succeeding ages, and by which, incidentally, our civilization will be appraised when million dollar corporations are forgotten. Much could be said in this connection of opportunities awaiting individuals, art associations, and women's clubs. When a higher

standard than the present is adopted, however, such opportunities will be sought for, and that time will be a better one than the present in which to discuss them. The standard comes first. From its attainment will spring many significant events.

From the engraving by Marc Antonio

FIG. 76

AFTER RAPHAEL

Here is the opposite end of the design scale from that shown in the Indian carving of the frontispiece. Vast complication and sophistication against primitive simplicity. Yet every detail of the complicated mass perfectly controlled! Works like this probably mark the supreme three dimensional design achievements of man in complicated themes. For pure art power, however, the studied simplicity of the Greek vase undoubtedly surpasses this type of work.

FIG. 77

Realistic drawing of a cypress tree with all the visually meaningless wiggles, and spaces between wiggles, left as they are in nature. Compare this to the universalized cypresses in fig. 27.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

SEVERAL of the matters we have been discussing probably constitute (that feared but unescapable word) the *science* of art. We have dared to examine a little into this science when many affirm such action to be a sort of sacrilege. That the curtain must not be raised, seems to be a rather general opinion; the inner sanctuary must not be profaned by vulgar eyes. Knowledge of the whys and wherefores of the art process is materialistic and therefore taboo. Intuition, mysticism, awe and reverence, and knowledge about knowledge, should be the avenues of approach, for so is dignity maintained. But—has the human body been profaned, or the appreciation of its beauty lessened, by a knowledge of anatomy? Or is the Parthenon less a masterpiece in our eyes because Hambidge has discovered its proportions to be based on a geo-

metric relation of areas expressed by the square root of five? Or is a symphony less moving for recognizing the repetition and elaboration of motives that contribute to the design, or by knowing the organization of the orchestra? Such knowledge once acquired need not engulf sensation. It can be ignored at will, or it can serve its end subconsciously, or even consciously, while an enriched emotional response is made possible because of it. And if knowledge of the contributing science means gain in sensational experience in the cases of nature, and of such of the arts as architecture, music, poetry and drama (some study of versification and play-anatomy is deemed the normal approach to this art), why may it not be essential in the case of pictorial art?

Scientific knowledge in the field of art may be, however, a danger, as well as a blessing. That it has been a destructive influence is written into the record by the history of the past three hundred years since the scientific attitude of mind began to direct attention toward the mechanics of imitation, or truth to nature, and away from the emotion of pure sensation. The prevalence

of this scientific state of mind throughout society to-day is an alarming matter, if one wishes to be alarmed, and is certainly a direct cause of the prevailing esthetic malnutrition.[1] In this sense, to say that science has been the Nemesis of

[1] The prevalence of the idea that art has to do with truth can be estimated from the writings and sayings of persons in all walks of life, who have not yet comprehended the modern approach. The following quotation from an article on "The Art of Public Speaking" by Hon. Albert J. Beveridge in the *Saturday Evening Post* of April 26th, 1924, is one case in point:

"Oratory as a fine art. . . . For art is the most finished expression of truth in its myriad aspects, with the least possible obstruction in that presentation, so that those who hear or look, can get most easily the thing presented. It follows that art is the highest functioning of the mind and soul of man; and it follows, too, that it requires the utmost instruction, training and practise to become an artist of any kind."

The "come-back" of the new point of view on a pronouncement like this would be as follows:

The expression of "truth" requires knowledge and skill. Assuming the knowledge, skill may be taught, and learned with training and practice. The *how it is done,* wherein lies the art if there be any, cannot be taught, or learned by practice. It must be the creative contribution of the artist. Skill is the tool with which he expresses art, and always a valuable means toward that end. Art expressed blunderingly, with little or no skill, may yet have inherent power to move one emotionally (the function of art) whereas skill, without art, may arouse admiration but never emotion.

The Senator weakened his argument by unthinkingly adopting an inherited belief and applying it to his own field. He knows right well, if he stops to think, that skill in presentation of truth is a very secondary matter when it comes to moving an audience with oratory. There, as elsewhere, it is the *quality* of the presen-

art is certainly no exaggeration. Witness the blighting effect wherever modern society has come in contact with indigenous art. England in India is an outstanding example, as is our systematic murder of the native arts of the American Indian. To blame commercialism entirely for this levelling process does not go deep enough. It is a state of mind that is guilty—a state of mind which, having lost the ability to respond emotionally to works of art, gives no *intrinsic* value to them, and allows commercialism to kill, either through competition or exploitation. England killed the East Indian textile art of the hand loom by the former method—by flooding India with the cheaper products of the machine loom. We have completely killed the weaving art, for instance, of the famous village of Chimayo in New Mexico, where the finest of Mexican blankets were woven fifty and a hundred years ago, by buying from the villagers in too large quantities, a cheapened, inferior, commercialized, though still hand

tation, of truth, or nonsense, or any subject matter, that *sways* the crowd emotionally. If he applied his own definition strictly, a professor of mathematics, because of his trained mind, would prove a greater orator than a Lincoln.

woven, substitute for the work of the past. If we had cared for intrinsic art value, we would have compelled the maintainance of the old high standard by buying only (at a higher price) blankets made of homespun wool and vegetable dye, and by refusing to buy the cheapened product made with Germantown yarn, store dyes, and ornate pattern. The Navajo Indians are now in the middle stage of this process of demoralization. The demand for inferior blankets has increased so fast that there is no need to do good work with the doubtful chance of a sale at a price that would pay for the extra labor. But profit can be made on good work as well as on atrocities. Works of art have always had their price, and been bought and sold at profit. No, it is not commercialism—entirely. It is the scientific attitude of mind that is guilty of demoralization in art, or worse than demoralization—of total annihilation.

Science is ordered knowledge. The scientific attitude of mind is concerned, to speak cautiously, with knowledge. Knowledge is objective. It must be about something—relativity, cake-baking, horses, art. There is an axiom hidden

here. A person may *know* so much *about* a thing that he does not *know* the *thing itself*. A four year old child, knowing nothing about a thing, may know it vividly, that is, feel it, see it, sense it, while a professor of philosophy may know volumes about it, and not know it, in this meaning, at all. Take the case of the two school girls. "Come on out to the Zoo and see the animals," says one. "Can't," answers the other, "Got to study my zoölogy." The pail and dark paper experiments of Chapter II indicate that knowing may prevent seeing. We are now going a step farther and saying that knowing may prevent sensing. Or, if it does not prevent it (and it need not) it can exist without it. An extreme example of a man in this condition of mind is the before mentioned H. G. Spearing, who blithely calls the Egyptians children in art, and assumes maturity to lie in the imitative dexterity of his own time, as exemplified, doubtless, by a John S. Sargent. His is the well-stocked mind of the scientist, entirely unaware of the different world of visual sensation. To three scientists with whom the writer has broken lances, art was a

type of picture writing. To one its purpose was to convey information subtly and suggestively, his favorite work of art being the Greek "Discus Thrower" because in that statue the artist had portrayed a movement that was *about* to take place, the presumption being apparently, that this was a much more subtle achievement than the portraying of a movement actually taking place. To another its function was to record visual facts such as buildings and places, his home art gallery consisting of excellent records of Coliseums, Notre Dames, etc. To the third, its chief merit seemed to be accuracy—accuracy in reporting facts, of course. This man had bought an Eileen Soper etching because the proportions of the children's bodies were correct. Of the three, only the last, whose field was medicine, had any doubts, or modesty, as to the adequacy of his standard. The first, whose field at the time was art analysis, and the second, whose field was mathematics, had complete assurance of the sufficiency of their approaches. Not one of the three recognized either the existence, or possibility, of visual sensation as a matter of im-

portance in connection with art. It was completely outside their consciousness. The scientist represents the highly ordered functioning of this type of knowing mind; the layman represents its foggy, incomplete functioning. The former may approach art with shrewd analysis, and miss the mark; the latter may approach it with strong accepted or inherited beliefs, that are probably vague in their application, and also miss. Both stages of development represent the same angle of approach, which we have called, with more or less accuracy, the scientific attitude. And it is this attitude which, in our time, notwithstanding its great value in other fields, loses all contact with art, and is dangerous from a cultural point of view, because its influence is negative and destructive.

The scientific attitude of mind, however, need be neither negative nor destructive. That it is so, results from concern with the wrong type of knowledge rather than from the fact of having knowledge. A misconception of the purpose of art canonized by the usage of three centuries, has diverted society onto a detour remote from the

world of sensation, and attendant knowledge has been, quite naturally, as foreign as the way itself. From such a situation there is no escape but by going back to the beginning and making a fresh start. Art leans on science. Design is ordered sensation. And, in its very highest expression, dynamic symmetry, it is built four-square on ordered knowledge. Therefore knowledge of the different world of sensation, even if it only goes so far as to recognize the fact of its existence, is an aid to comprehension, and, as has been said, when contact with that world has been lost, is apparently the only method of regaining it. A modern artist once wrote in a letter, "Work means nothing to me unless done with every intellectual sinew I possess brought to bear on rich emotional reactions to nature." Let that statement stand as the ideal of the work-method of the creative artist—as the definition of the means of attaining classicism. And let it serve also as the approach-method of the layman to a work of art. It covers the whole case. It is this book packed into a single sentence.

When all is said, however, science is only a

means to an end. The end is design. Design in pictures has an entity of its own—has a value which must be recognized and appreciated wherever found, whether in the form of pure or partial abstraction, or when imposed on nature with the least possible abstraction. The degree must be overlooked, the essence observed. Only by such a process can the new approach be made one's own. By accepting this approach, the way is cleared for the appreciation of the greater achievement wherein the felt nature of life, or things, is expressed through design—the achievement which is the presupposed requisite in all great creative art.

In closing, a word about the source of this new means to vital experience. The so-called Modern Movement does not offer, at present, a clean-cut, obvious issue either to artists or laymen. Certain persons who have penetrated to the basic principle find themselves in an accord in their judgments and sensations which is quite thrilling to them in contrast to the babel of judgments that prevailed under the standard of representation. But others, who only grasp part

of the principle, or misunderstand it, find themselves confused between the two conflicting standards, and most unsure of their judgments. In this last classification are found all those artists who imitate the superficial qualities of the movement as exposed in the styles of the men who are its chief exponents. They flood the market and galleries with lifeless reflections of Cézanne and others, which give the critics the right to talk of the dwindling Movement and to surmise hopefully that out of the "insanity" something good *may* come in time. This, from the critics, soothes the somewhat disturbed complacency of the layman by reinstating his inherited beliefs in his own esteem, and thus delays any real clearing up of the confusion.

Confusion is needless. The Modern Movement has given us a basic principle. That principle can be isolated and understood unless the present research is all illusion. If there is such a principle outcropping in the work of Renoir, Cézanne, Seurat, Picasso, Dérain, Matisse, the Cubists, and others which correlates with the great arts of human history, then that is the super-

latively important matter. It is the thing to be seized on avidly, to be examined, tested, questioned in the effort to make it available. It is the supreme contribution. Artists, by accepting it and making it their own, can then build on it in their own individual styles with endless opportunity for individual expression. Laymen may make it their measuring rod gaining from it assurance in their esthetic judgments. It is this contribution which the writer has found in "modern work." It is this contribution which he has tried to emphasize in these pages.

APPENDIX

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF THE STANDARD HEREIN SET FORTH TO THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS WHICH PRESENT THEMSELVES TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND WHICH DEPEND FOR THEIR ANSWER ON HOW HE SEES PICTURES

BOOKS TO READ

ON RELATED THEORY

"How to Listen to Music," Henry E. Krebiehl, Scribners, 1897, $1.75.

"Enjoyment of Poetry," Max Eastman, Scribners, 1916, $2.00.

"Pictorial Beauty on the Screen," Victor O. Freeburg, Macmillan, 1924, $2.50.

These volumes cover their fields with a purpose very closely related to the present one and will greatly enlarge the horizon of any one not already familiar with their approach.

ON THE THEORY OF MODERN ART

"Art," Clive Bell, Stokes, 1914, $2.50.

"Vision and Design," Roger Fry, Brentano's, 1920, $2.50.

"Cubists and Post Impressionists," Arthur J. Eddy, McClurg, 1914, $5.00.

"Modern French Painters," Jan Gordon, John Lane, London, 1923, $7.00.

"Primer of Modern Art," Sheldon Cheney, Boni & Liveright, 1924, $6.00.

"Cubism," Albert Gleizes & Jean Metzinger, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1915.

ON RELATED THEORY

"On the Laws of Japanese Painting," Henry P. Bowie, Paul Elder, 1912, $3.50.

"Nietsche and Art," Ludovici, J. W. Luce, 1912, $1.50.

ON THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

"Modern Movements in Painting," Charles Marriott, Chapman & Hall, London, 1920, $7.50.

"The French Impressionists (1860 to 1900)," Camille Mauclair, Dutton, $1.50.

"History of Art," Élie Faure, Translated by Walter Pach, Harpers, 1921, 4 vols., each $4.50.

"Since Cézanne," Clive Bell, Harcourt, Brace, 1922, $2.50.

"The Masters of Modern Art," Walter Pach. N. Y. Huebsch. N. Y. 1924. $3.50.

"Georges Seurat," Walter Pach. N. Y. Duffield & Co. and The Arts 1923. $2.00.

TECHNICAL AND THEORETICAL

"Composition," Arthur Dow, Doubleday, Page, 1916. $5.00.

"Dynamic Symmetry and the Greek Vase," Jay Hambidge, Yale Univ. Press, 1920, $6.00.

"The Diagonal," a magazine in 12 numbers, edited by Jay Hambidge. Yale Univ. Press, $5.00 set.

"Dynamic Symmetry and Composition," Jay Hambidge, $3.00.

GENERAL

"The Humanizing of Knowledge," James Harvey Robinson, Doran, 1923, $1.50.

"The Human Machine," Arnold Bennett, Doran, $1.50.

"Journalism Versus Art," Max Eastman. N. Y. Knopf. 1916, out of print.

"How to Appreciate Prints," Frank Weitenkampf. N. Y. Scribners, new edition, 1923. $4.00.

MAGAZINES SHOWING CONTEMPORARY CREATIVE ART

AMONG periodicals that are recording the history-making developments of their times in pictorial art by showing so-called modern work the following are probably the most important.

THE ARTS devotes its pages entirely to significant works of the present and past that are in tune with the "grand

tradition" of all time. It shows no representative work. As a record of what is happening today it is most complete, and uncompromising, and therefore the most valuable.

THE DIAL is showing modern work and much that it shows is of lasting importance but unfortunately its standard is not so severe in the pictorial as in the literary field and it has in the past admitted many works to its pages that are too trivial to have lasting significance.

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO has, during the past several years, given an increasing amount of space to modern work, until the representative and modern schools have received about equal attention. As this book goes to press, however, a change in policy seems to have gone into effect which has resulted in the elimination of most modern work and a return to the standards of several years ago. It is to be hoped that this policy is only temporary.

THE SURVEY GRAPHIC is undoubtedly a pioneer among non-art magazines in that it has been the first to use modern works as illustrations to its text, and also as an independent means of interpreting contemporary life that is supplementary to its keen analytical literary approach. In doing this it undoubtedly points the way for magazine illustration of the future when all illustrations will be works of art as well as illustrations.

Appendix

VANITY FAIR has shown single pages of modern work for several years and, among popular magazines, has been a pioneer in this respect. Also its covers have long stood out in startling contrast to the prevailing candy-box level of the news stands pretty girls. Also its "chique" illustrations have borrowed much superficial flavor from modern art.

THE LITTLE REVIEW has always pioneered as courageously in the pictorial as in the literary field and with as little compromise to the public taste.

THE LIBERATOR, since its birth as THE MASSES, has probably published more vital modern drawings than any other magazine in this country.

THE BROOM, recently reborn, is entirely devoted to modern work. It is a striking example of an alive magazine that is too good to sell in quantity.

L'AMOUR DE L'ART, published in Paris, gives a comprehensive record of French modern work in all mediums.

THE PLAYBOY, a lively, modern magazine presenting the significant art of the day both pictorial and dramatic. It often includes tipped-in wood-block prints on Japan paper of significant modern work.

SHADOWLAND has presented considerable contemporary creative work and it is one of the few magazines that have used works of art on its covers.

L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU, of Paris, is a copiously illustrated

record of contemporary history-making events in all arts.

DER QUERSCHNITT is similar in purpose to L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU—publishing articles in German, French and English.

BURLINGTON MAGAZINE, London, devoted to the great arts of the past with occasional articles on modern art.

DEUTSCHE KUNST UND DEKORATION, in German, has given a comprehensive record of modern developments as they have occurred.

DAS PLAKAT is of especial value as showing pictorial advertisements that are works of art.

The magazines here listed and others like them are making history in the magazine field, and are recording history in the making in the art field. It goes without saying that they should be available in every library and in every home. Without them a person who is away from the art centers of the country has no means of knowing what is happening in art during the year in which it is happening. They are supplementary to the more general survey of the books herewith listed, and furnish the opportunity to a student to apply the principles presented in the books.

Appendix

Two or three of these magazines come under the diagnosis of Max Eastman in his *Journalism Versus Art,* The reader can easily identify them by the character of their contents. The others quite decidedly do not so qualify.

SOME STUDY SUGGESTIONS

Many public libraries have collections of photographs of works of art of all periods which may be taken out, like books, and studied. In such study, frequent turning upside down should be resorted to in order to lose the meaning of subject matter and to see the lines, forms, spaces, etc., more easily. With thin tracing paper laid over such photographs, outlines can be drawn, as in fig. 75, which gives a most graphic means of seeing the essential character of the picture. Where two opposite types of work are thus treated, as in fig. 73 which is "modern," or highly organized into design, and fig. 74 which is strictly a representative work with no thought of design organization, the contrast between the two classes of work is striking. The one is simple, dignified, universal: the other fussy, accidental, particular.

After the ability is gained to recognize organ-

ized visual relations of elements it is interesting to study representative pictures and observe their unorganized elements—the meaningless relations of uncontrolled and copied nature.

Another excellent method of study is to take a piece of cardboard about post-card size, and cut an opening about one inch square near the middle of it. This can then be laid over a picture and the portion that shows through the opening studied apart from its context. In this case also the meaning of subject matter is largely lost and the quality of the work exposed. For instance when the branches of the tree in the realistic drawing of fig. 77 are thus observed their visually meaningless wiggles and spaces between wiggles are more obvious than when the entire drawing has its chance to convey the concept "tree" to the mind and thus distract attention from the essence of the thing itself. The same test applied to a highly organized work such as the "Sistine Madonna" of fig. 46 will reveal the perfect organization of every square inch of the picture. The same card, or another with an oblong opening, can then be used to observe forms

in nature, thus supplying a boundary to the limitless spaces about one. By this simple means one of the problems of the artist can be realized.

With both these methods the entire list of the design elements of the design alphabet of chapter IV can be hunted for in turn in a given picture. By first tracing the border, then some three or four main lines or angles that seem related to it and to each other, and then studying, in the tracing, the relations of these elements, their design significance, or lack of it, can be felt. A course of study covering a wide range of pictures could thus be laid out, and by really *looking at* results with an effort to feel the relations, observation and sensitive reactions could be developed with surprising rapidity. Thirty minutes a day for a month would probably accomplish a revolution in approach to all pictures and open up forever this "mystery."

Since really seeing pictures depends on keen observation, any method which develops observation is a help toward that end. Under such a head come those games which children like, and which depend on remembering and describ-

ing objects seen for one minute in a strange room, or on a tray, or in a certain spot outdoors. Seeing and reporting on insects, leaves, flowers, trees, clouds, fishes, dirty paper littering floor or street, clothes, faces, personal peculiarities, etc., etc., contributes to the same result as does the sudden asking of a person at dinner to describe the design on his dressing gown, or other familiar objects of daily use.

BEAUTY AND ART

The term that is most overworked in all usual approaches to art is "beauty." That term has been purposely avoided here because it has come to be entirely misleading through the generally accepted restriction of its meaning to beauties of nature such as sunsets, butterfly wings, roses, women, etc. When this application is entrenched in the mind, it is next to impossible to stretch the word to cover the different beauty that exists in the creation of an artist. The following extract from a letter to the writer from the head of an important art organization illustrates the restricted use. The italics are ours.

"I do not deny that there is a germ of something worth while in so-called modernism, but it certainly is not finding expression along the right lines to-day, and will not so long as it contents itself with contortions and vulgarities. To my mind, art which does not concern itself with

beauty is not worth considering, for that is the mission of art—to add more beauty to the world. I know that at present you scorn representative art, but you will not, I hope, mind my saying that the art that has enabled you, in the past, to *transcribe and make manifest* certain beauties of nature, is an art which is essentially worth while, and I hope that you will not cast it aside completely. The world to-day stands in great need of visions of beauty."

This is an excellent statement of the general point of view which would have the artist "transcribe and make manifest" the beauties of nature. Since this entire book has been an attempt to present the artist as a creator of beauty in his own right, instead of a transcriber of natural beauty, there will be no need to reopen the argument here. It seems pertinent, however, to make it plain that the word beauty is omitted, not because it might not cover both approaches, but because the inherited limitation of its meaning to one will not let it cover both. By "contortions and vulgarities" the writer, doubtless, refers to departure from truth to nature,

or abstraction. The fact that he does not see design in abstract works proves that he does not see it in the old respectable masterpieces of which he most approves for other reasons. If one sees design, contortions plus design never could be vulgarities.

OFFICIAL ART

Official art pronouncements, such as awards of honors or prizes, commissions for statues or murals, and selections of works for official exhibits, need to be looked into and the forces at work back of them understood, before blind confidence is placed in their infallibility. If such pronouncements are made by juries of artists it is pertinent to know by what group these juries were controlled, whether conservative or radical. Decisions can then be qualified. Instead of saying that such a work, having received first prize, is the *best* in the exhibition, one can, and should, say it is the best in the opinion of the conservative artists in control of the jury, or in the opinion of the radicals, or whatever the case may be. From such a course clarity of understanding is possible.

When judgments are made by public officials several facts must be borne in mind. In a

democracy such as ours, officials are either elected by a majority of citizens, or appointed by another official who is so elected, or chosen by boards of directors who are conservative business men. In any case they and their views are apt to personify the majority standard. In the field of public commissions, this type of official judgment has reared monuments to itself all over the country, in its statues to soldiers and sailors and its choice of decorations and designs of public buildings, but its crowning glory is probably the MacMonnies statue "Civic Virtue," which it has prominently installed in City Hall Park of the city of New York. Representing, as it does, a very earthy nude "he-man" of the policeman type trampling the writhing, be-garlanded form of a woman, this official conception of virtue is not only degraded and degrading in idea, but commonplace in its unrelieved realism. Yet there it stands proudly advertising to all beholders that New York City, America's center of culture, officially believes in the standards of 1880. This statue and all art judgments of like calibre stand as memorials of our dark age of art—the lowest

ebb of the art tide possible in human expression. Let us give thanks that there are many Americans besides such officials and the majority that elected them and that these have long since climbed out of this abyss.

Among the exceptions to the worst official judgments stand those that are near enough in tune with the times to commission good representative murals or monuments with some art quality. When work such as fig. 73 is commissioned we shall have reached the beginning of our golden age.

The layman, therefore, must pause a moment when he hears of the latest thousand dollar prize award, or the latest commission for a statue commemorating man's combative qualities, and question: Who decided? Why the particular decision? What standards were in power? To what age do these standards belong? The necessity is hard to face but there simply is no easy way out. The individual layman has got to do his own thinking—and a considerable amount of his own judging.

ON BUYING PICTURES

Individuals who are too modest to act on their own judgment in buying pictures must choose their source of advice. The available sources of advice throughout the country are the museum, the art association, the women's club art department, the art and popular magazine, the art critic, the art lecturer, the artist, the art dealer, and the interior decorator.

Enough has been said to the effect that caution is advisable in accepting the offerings of "art critics" and other teachers of the subject. That the same sifting process must be extended to the pronouncements of artists, goes without saying when one, an academician, defines art as "anything well done," and fine art as "anything extremely well done," while another may elaborate a contrary definition even to the length of these pages. Artists are not often coherent in two mediums, and are too prone to talk in their

own special language. They are likely to give too little credit to the layman for whatever gains in appreciation he does make, and too much blame for obvious inherited shortcomings. Indeed, misunderstanding is the usual situation between artist and public, so much so that direct communication is almost impossible. An intermediate agency to translate each to the other is a virtual necessity, if there is to be any understanding. That agency is increasingly to be found in the woman's club, the art association, and the museum with the open-door educational policy.

That these three agencies are coming to supply this connecting link more and more adequately is one of the encouraging signs of the times. The chairmen of art departments, the secretaries of associations and museums, through their management of exhibition, lecture and study activities, become a focus of interchange that must mean growth. To these active, interested, unselfish persons come the inquiries of those who want to know about pictures—What to see in this? Is this one good to buy? Why is it bad?

Why is it good?[2] Art chairmen and secretaries are not always infallible in their pronouncements, of course, but their interest is rooted in either a real love, or a desire to know (speaking generally), and their judgments can only be biased by inherited beliefs (an honest bias), and not by considerations of profit. The inherited belief, when outgrown, breaks down in time—is vulnerable to knowledge, which makes growth possible. As they grow, their members grow with them. By going to these agencies to question and to buy, the individual is sure of sincere advice, which is probably sounder than his own judgment, especially if that is undeveloped, and his act, and the nominal commission from his purchase, stimulates and helps finance further activity. Purchasing power is a great force. Let it act in the field of the arts through organi-

[2] A first loan print exhibit staged by the Woman's Club of a Southwestern city forced on the art chairman the necessity of decisions between genuine artist proofs and commercial prints of commercial etchings. She was not sure and went about questioning. The questioned ones were not sure but began investigating. The resulting interest crowded the hall at an exhibition of very high quality originals—and no commercials.

zations which *can afford to educate.* Commercialism, by its complacent prostitution of art wherever it touches it, has long forfeited all right to consideration. The two interests are opposite. On the women's clubs, art associations, and museums of the country rests the responsibility for education in art.

To these organizations come, during the year, many local and travelling exhibitions in all mediums which represent the art productions of the year. In a highly civilized state of society these exhibitions would be the table talk of the entire population of the city or town in which they occurred. Buyers would watch them as brokers watch the stock reports, and depend on them for paintings, sculptures, architectural designs, prints, and all kinds of handicrafts. Prices in such exhibitions are properly fixed, without juggling, profiteering, or excessive commissions to middlemen. A small fee goes to the organization, usually from 10% to 15%, to help defray expenses, the rest goes to the working producer. To buy from such exhibitions is a

sure and quick method for the layman to enter into the world of art.[3]

Organizations of this kind have to practice an open-door policy, since they are public agencies, and accept for exhibition all schools of art so long as they are non-commercial and sincere expressions. This is as it should be. All serious work has a claim to a showing. Sometimes even commercial work creeps into the museums, to which, of course, it is always laying siege. Public criticism and lack of purchase is the most effective means of elimination of such,

[3] The following incident is illuminating in this connection. A wealthy man saw a very good realistic painting of an animal reproduced in color on the cover of an art magazine. He liked it and went to the editor, saying that he wanted to buy the original. The editor referred him to the "exclusive" dealer from whom he had borrowed it. In any museum exhibit a painting of this class would be priced at from $300.00 to $500.00. The man paid the dealer $2500.00 for it. Such an event seems almost tragic. If the man had had knowledge, or judgment, he would have indignantly refused such a price, or, if he was willing to spend so much money, would have gone to a museum exhibition and bought five or more paintings of equal merit, kept one for himself and given the others to some public school whose empty walls cry for them. Possession of wealth surely involves some responsibility in this, as in other, directions. Even more than other people, the person of means needs a standard of wise expenditures, both for his own satisfaction and for the beneficial result on society.

and other inferior work. This again means discrimination. Always discrimination.

One other desirable method of purchasing works of art is to go direct to the artist. A feeling on the part of the layman that artists are "aloof," or "haughty," or disdainful of their timid knowledge need not prevent going to them to buy. The true artist is aloof from his public because practically every contact with it forces the fact into his consciousness that his work is not valued (when it is valued at all) for its intrinsic worth but for other side-issue reasons, that his best work is nearly always misunderstood and ignored, and that, as a result of this situation, he is virtually an outcast. Social honors when prompted by his "interesting personality," or his fame, or his value as a social asset, are empty and do not dispel this deep-rooted hurt. Communication under such circumstances is impossible. Aloofness is his only refuge and means to peace. But when a layman comes to him to buy—the very act spells valuation of work, the heart is warmed, and communication becomes spontaneous. Such a visitor earns the right to

benefit from the specialized knowledge of the artist, as he earns the same right to specialized knowledge, when he pays a retainer fee to a doctor, or lawyer, or when he buys a ticket to a concert, or lecture. He is welcome because he brings with him the means to more production.[4] The commercial artist is deferential to a buyer solely for monetary reasons; the true artist feels kindly to a buyer for proving his "love of art" by action as well as words—and for the material support.

The art dealer and decorator as sources of buying advice will be considered separately.

[4] In his experience the writer has heard of only one case of an artist repelling a visiting buyer because of her "ignorance." And in this case the act proved to the writer's satisfaction his earlier impression that this man was a posèur aping the eccentricities of Whistler.

THE ART DEALER

In appraising the art dealer, a little analysis will illuminate his position and the resultant character of his influence. First of all, it must be remembered that he is a business man in business to make money. To do this he must sell the greatest possible number of the most profitable pictures. The easiest means to that end is to give the buyer what he wants. The answer of a certain dealer when asked why he displayed colored photographs in the front window and kept his original etchings in a drawer in the back room, covers this point. "A colored photograph sells itself in three minutes whereas it would take an hour of argument to sell an original etching." Then he added the classic remark of all art dealers, "It's not my business to educate the public. I give them what they want." He did not add, in this case, that a profit of 400 or 500% on the photos, as against some 30% on the etch-

ings, had anything to do with the relative positions. Color reproductions are as profitable as color photos. The great average public wants colored pictures that "look like" nature. The article in demand is the seller's harvest. The result is that in every commercial art or department store machine-made reproductions are featured, and sold in quantity. In the "high class" trade there is a difference. The wealthy buyer too often wants the vicarious distinction of ownership of famous rareties.[5] Such cost money. The more they cost, the more famous and rare they must be,—the more they are wanted, and the more profit they return to the dealer. Therefore the Fifth Avenues of the country display original old masters in the window instead of chromos. But they are there, not because they are great works of art, as they often are, but for the chromo reason—profit.

[5] A person who really "loves art," loves all art regardless of when, where, who, and how much. When a collector says he is not interested in contemporary art, but only old masters, he means that he is not interested in art, but in some derivative of art—such as respectability. Famous art is more respectable than contemporary.

Appendix

In the case of contemporary original pictures the artist usually gets from one-half to two-thirds of the selling price, the balance being a reasonable selling commission about large enough to cover selling costs. Sale of such work is difficult—the more creative it is the more difficult because the smaller the number of its appreciators. The ordinary commission on such sales is not large enough to be "very attractive" to the dealer. Suppose, then, a dealer knows and likes significant work, and "would like to sell it," but is "not in business for love," and fills his store with what he himself will often classify (privately) as "junk." A customer with thirty dollars to spend, asks his advice. On his answer hinges his profit. Shall it be $20.00 or $8.00? The pressure is too much. Can he, does he, give an honest answer and take the loss?

THE DEALER WHO LIVES UP TO AN IDEAL

There are in the country a small total of dealers who do take the loss—who do live up to their ideal—who do give true advice as they see

it, and who make good financially in the end by slowly, painfully, building on the confidence of individual customers which they have fairly won. These few among thousands deserve the support of every agency for good in their community. They perform true service, they give themselves to the cause of education. All honor to them. They will not be found, by the way, on the costliest Fifth Avenue corners, but on side streets, or upstairs—a fact which rather measures the American public. They can be identified without difficulty. Their shops will display "unpopular" originals—works that are ahead of average understanding. If one enters such a shop with intellectual and emotional curiosity he will feel distinction in the air—and the stimulation of something beyond his immediate grasp. In charge he will find a man who has an ideal and is living up to it, and who is ready and willing to "educate" if a question extends the invitation. Such dealers really earn their commission on sales and should have (and do have) the loyal support and appreciation of both artists

and individuals of the public whom they serve so constructively.[6]

There is a class of dealer between these two extremes who sells original contemporary work in paintings, sculptures, prints, etc. This class caters to a public which is above the chromo and photograph stage, and not rich enough to buy old masters. It is the individual buyers from this group who contribute to the development of their age by helping, through purchase support, to make the production of contemporary work possible. This is the hopeful group—the one that deserves every educational help and right direction. Its members, however, like all of modern society, are the inheritors of the representative tradition and the great majority quite naturally think a contemporary original should either "look like" something or "be like" some accepted work of the past. In painting, the work of twenty-five

[6] The writer knows and respects six such print dealers in the city of New York and as many more in the rest of the United States. Of those who partly compromise with business expediency, he knows several dozen, and of those whose policy is "strictly business" too many to count.

to fifty years ago, or similar contemporary work, is understood and bought. The work of to-day, grown out of Post-Impressionism, is still strange and misunderstood and shunned. In prints, Rembrandt and Whistler are fountain heads, therefore most of them buy prints by contemporary "second Whistlers," or Rembrandts, forgetting that imitative work is always weaker than its source, and always esthetically insignificant. The dealer supplying such buyers, therefore, meets the same type of money pressure that works on the chromo dealer. Impressionistic representation is wanted, easy to sell, and therefore profitable to feature. Work that is "like" dogs, or ducks, or mountains, or dancing girls, or Inness, or Whistler, or that is nature suggestively presented, with only enough variation from the standard to display "personality," sells in quantity, and insures a revenue from the more modest commissions that obtain on living artist's work. Such dealers will gladly supply any work that is asked for, but "cannot afford" to give the time and expense necessary to introduce new, unfamiliar creative work that needs education to

put over. "It is not their job to educate the public."

The result of such analysis as this should not be to place general blame on the dealer. The fact that his is a business enterprise probably justifies all profits, and most of the means of obtaining them. The object lesson is that, except in a very few extreme cases, his advice is thoroughly prejudiced by matters of profit and cannot be depended upon, and his stock is always chosen for its salability—never for merit. A buyer with his own standard may make use of the dealer's machinery of supply, indeed, if he is after good things, may find the dealer a ready ally in obtaining them, for many dealers have a conscience and really would like to sell good work, and are pleased if they are forced to do so by an intelligent buyer. In looking over walls full of framed commercial trash at fifteen to thirty dollars in one shop, the writer came upon a very good original color aquatint, the ordinary price of which would be twenty-five dollars. But it was marked twelve dollars. "Why so cheap?" he asked the dealer. "Why the original less than

the commercial reproductions?" "Ah!" was the sad answer, "Nobody knows; nobody cares." [7]

Slow improvement is to be noted in the dealer field, however. Many of the leading department stores in addition to having tons of the usual trash in their "art departments" are opening real galleries in which they show only originals, and some are carrying out a regular program of monthly one-man shows by contemporary artists. One New York store is even showing radical creative "modern" work. These departments are, in some cases, in charge of men or women with an ideal who would like to go much farther in this direction than the general manager, with

[7] If the individual buyer of any art object from a Christmas card to a couch cover, could only realize that the *prevailing* (not the exceptional) standard of taste to-day is almost as degraded as it has ever been in the entire history of man—that it is infinitely below that of the unspoiled Indian and many savages, (for such create while we imitate), and could then reason from this fact that to just the extent to which his own taste coincides with the average taste, it also must be low and undeveloped, then a start toward improvement could be made. For then he would realize that business, to gain profit from pleasing the average taste, must present and sell bad art. When he entered the cheap department store or the sumptuous sales room, he would know why imitations, fakes, copies, veneers, bad colors, bad designs were displayed on all sides. He would understand what went on behind the scenes in every store of the kind, how the buyers would reject quality in design for popularity in design,

his eye on dividends, will let them. Buying power has undoubtedly created this change and will govern future developments. The matter is all in the hands of the buyers.

reject good art for bad art. And then perhaps he would realize a sense of responsibility in purchasing—that buying mediocrity causes the production of mediocrity. May that time come.

THE INTERIOR DECORATOR

In so far as it bears on pictures, the creed of the decorators and their resultant advice seems to be quite uniform in character, even though the personal equation among members of the profession varies the severity of the application in given cases. An extreme manifestation of this creed was rumored recently as declaring for "no more pictures." But that policy seems not to have gone beyond the rumor stage, at least it is not yet law, and we shall therefore ignore it. A more accurate appraisal can be made from such an article as one that appeared in *Good Housekeeping* magazine recently, called "Choosing the Right Picture." Following is the sub-title, caption to the illustrations, and opening paragraph of the article. The italics are the writer's.

Appendix

"ACCORD BETWEEN HISTORIC ELEMENT IN FURNITURE BACKGROUND AND PICTURES IS ESSENTIAL"

"To the right, a representative Corot landscape, a charming thing for a Georgian living-room, or to incorporate into a panel over a dining-room fireplace. Below is Drouais' painting, "The Flutist." It typifies the French feeling of that period, the gayety and irresponsibility, and the correct surroundings in which to place it would be a Louis XV music-room, a French bedroom, or any feminine apartment done in the modern manner."

"The Rembrandt portrait below is the perfect accompaniment for William and Mary furniture, or even for the somewhat older period, Jacobean. It represents the transition epoch when decoration was turning from massive to more graceful lines. The *old English* print at the foot of page is the *natural choice* for *American* colonial rooms. It would be in keeping with English rooms done in Sheraton, Heppelwhite, or Adam style."

Appendix

"In choosing the pictures for any room *the most important consideration is the matter of accord,* or the historic and artistic relation between furniture and decorations. This accord is not hard to obtain. It means simply a recognition of the historic element in furniture and background."

The point of view here presented has several characteristics that are immediately obvious.

1. It is entirely backward looking.

2. It treats pictures exactly as it treats textiles—as spots of decoration to be judged in relation to an harmonious room scheme, and as *no more* than that.

3. It bases the harmony, or "accord" solely on the historic element, (though harmony of color is undoubtedly assumed).

4. It advocates the use of commercial reproductions (without saying so) since the pictures recommended could hardly be had in the original.

5. It advocates borrowing instead of earning respectability.

This advice tells all people to live in the environment of the respectable courtly past, to ignore the arts of their own day, to take no part in the great adventure of creating contemporary art by commission or purchase, to dare nothing individual in their home decoration but to conform to a set standard called "proper" by authorities. It would have them think of pictures as historic documents with decorative possibilities, and live with commercial copies produced by machinery instead of with original prints.

Such advice is entirely negative, of course. It neither has, nor could have, any cultural result, for to accept something that has no connection with present-day life or with the individual, merely because someone else says it is "proper," is a little below zero as a means to individual culture. It invites standardization, the every-home-the-same idea that means spiritual stagnation, dead-level monotony.

Against such negative advice we oppose the following:

1. Pictures are entities in themselves; they are sources of experience.

2. They should receive the respect to which such a position entitles them.

3. When articles of furniture in a room are works of art, pictures (which are also works of art) should be related to them, but only as aristocrat to plebeians; for in pictorial art the creative instinct has greater play than in the purely decorative application to furniture. In this sense, pictures become the focal point of the decorative scheme.

4. Harmony may exist between a picture and its surroundings, but it should be based on a kinship of art expression rather than on a matter of dates. There are wood-block prints or etchings made to-day with which a Heppelwhite table would "go" perfectly. To make such a selection becomes a vital cultural experience.

5. Original prints (i. e. wood-blocks, etchings, and lithographs) have the distinction of coming to the owner direct from the hand of the artist, in necessarily limited editions, with no intervention of commercial or mechanical processes. As such they have an inherent value that is obvious,

recognized, and that increases with time if they are significant works. Their modest prices (from five to thirty dollars, the same range as is charged for commercial reproductions) put them in reach of every home. Commercial reproductions, on the other hand, have a reference value which should make them, like books, available in a library. They are produced at small cost, in unlimited quantity, and their money value deteriorates from the date of purchase.[8] To give them the dignity and permanent importance of frames and wall-space is a cheap and colorless experience.

Of course, interior decorators are fulfilling an important function in their proper field, without question. It is only when they enter the field of pictorial art, and treat pictures like pieces of

[8] The president of a large printing house once told the writer that no ordinary sized color reproduction could possibly cost to produce anywhere near one dollar. In Europe the finest of such reproductions around 10 x 14 inches in size and up sell for from 25 to 75 cents, American money. In this country prints of the same size and of inferior quality sell for from 10 to 30 dollars. And because such tremendous profits can be taken from an ignorant public that demands them, they are featured in every commercial "art" store in the country. American prices include the frame worth $3.00 to $5.00.

cloth, that they lay themselves open to attack and to the charge of obstructing cultural development.

PICTURES IN THE HOME

Many homes harbor pictures that were wedding gifts a quarter of a century ago, or that are proxies for fish, roses, sunsets, grapes, lovers, old homesteads or lovely maidens. Some of these are valued because Aunt Sally, or George, or Isabel gave them, others because they have watched family events for so long that many romantic associations cling to them. Others stay because no one has thought of removing them and still others because no one ever thinks about them at all. Probably 96% of the pictures on the walls of American homes serve only as happy reminders of some *thing* or some *body* else, and rate exactly at zero as *sources of experience* in themselves.

An inventory of all pictures in the home is an excellent thing. With it quite naturally goes an appraisal and a reassortment. For those that are valued as gifts from departed or present

loved ones, and have no claim to value in their own right, an appropriate method is to fit up a private museum in the attic where all such can be hung in style and pilgrimages made to view them whenever a member of the family, or group of friends, wishes to "reminisce." The remainder will then have no sentimental cobwebs attached and can be judged on their merits. If they are mirrored reflections of some thing in nature or human life, two methods of treatment apply. They can be removed from their frames and pasted into a scrap-book which can thereafter be easily accessible in the library to any one who wishes to refresh his memory as to the appearance of nature, or the model. Or they can all be destroyed and reliance placed on one's own imagination for reference to facts in nature—a process which is a much more stimulating and interesting experience than merely glancing at a complete record.

The sentimental and reflecting pictures having thus been disposed of, there remain the reproductions or photographs of works of art including the work of the masters. These must not be de-

stroyed. They have real value and more right to frame and wall space than any yet mentioned. But, if the experiment of living with originals is to be tried, they will become more and more unsatisfactory as contact with original work grows keener, and so they must not be made too permanent. A compromise method would be to provide a beautiful portfolio for all of them, and then two frames with demountable backs into which two reproductions could be placed and hung for a time and changed on occasion. In the portfolio the others will be instantly available for those delightful and profitable study-hours when one enlarges his horizon by study of great work. In this form the collection of reproductions can be greatly increased, as it should be, and, by buying them unframed, a considerable saving can be made (i. e. the difference between prices under 50 cents and prices of $10.00 to $30.00). Such a collection can include magazine reproductions, which if they are taken from the high-quality art magazines will soon constitute a very valuable addition to the home library besides affording an exciting occupation to all

members of the family (including children) in the collecting.

The reproductions having now been taken care of, there remain only the original works of art. Discrimination is necessary here. In fact discrimination, and periodic change, is an invigorating program for all originals. In the process of selection free play is allowed for all the family critical faculties. In the weeding out, discussion may rage hot and heavy. Movies and dances will be forgotten. In fact the home life will probably be quite demoralized in the excitement —in which happy state the writer exits—with the rolling-pins crashing after him. Perhaps he has served just a tiny bit, however, by providing the frames and wall space for the new collection of original works of art.[9]

[9] A large variety of reproductions of works of art in photographs, half-tones and color prints, can be obtained from museums, especially from the Metropolitan of New York and the Art Institute of Chicago. Prices of these range all the way from two to fifty or seventy-five cents—the right price for such works. Also advice can be had from museums and public libraries as to where other such prints are obtainable.

ART IN THE SCHOOLS

There has been a movement under way for many years to put pictorial and sculptural art in the schools. Until very recently, that effort has largely resulted in the installation of reproductions of the master-pieces of the past. Since about the beginning of the century, however, a counter movement to install contemporary original works has gained slow headway. The plan put in operation by the Chicago Art Institute, of having its advanced students paint murals for the public schools at the cost of the materials, was probably the start of this movement, or certainly one of its earliest manifestations. Since then interest in school exhibits of American work has grown. It has been fostered by women's clubs, parent-teacher associations, art departments and principals. The response from the children has been so thrilling that enthusiasm has been contagious and spread

rapidly, until we must now be on the threshold of a very general awakening to the great importance of this opening of the doors of the art world to children.

The question as to the type of works which should go into the schools has many angles, of which only one or two can be touched on here. Since the question of cost between the different types need not enter in, original prints being available at practically the same price level as the larger mechanical reproductions, and paintings and sculptures being obtainable at a great range of costs from the free work of art students up, the questions of relative merit and the principle at stake become the important matters. Relative merits of originals and reproductions have been discussed elsewhere in this book, but to the evidence might be added the pride, keen interest and sense of direct contact which children instantly display in work of their own living artists, a contact which is lacking between them and artists of the past, regardless of the greatness of the work. The principle at stake centers in this. Has a nation an ethical

right to associate *only,* or *principally,* with the art of other ages and civilizations—in other words, to borrow instead of create its culture? Borrowing evidences lack of internal resources, if not of poverty, and borrowing peoples become negligible in history. Borrowing is the vogue at present because it is a means to display of wealth, because it is an easy way of escaping individual judgment and the attendant chance of making mistakes, because vicarious respectability attaches to it, and because former art is, in many cases, greater than our own of to-day. Shall the children be taught to borrow their art, or to share in its creation, or both?

ART AND THE "MOVIE"

What to do about the "Movies" is a question which cannot be entirely passed by in these pages, for the minute minority who cannot enjoy bullets and biffs and *simon pure* love, villainy, and righteousness, every night in the week have some rights—the right of protest at least. Yet is a protest really justified? We live in a democracy. The box office is the voting booth. We vote for the dime novel level, and we get it. What is there to say? The producers meet the demand and pocket the cash. They are not "in business for love." And why should they educate?

There was a test case recently. The film play, "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari," came over from Germany with both stage sets and acting the work of artists. The former were creative semi-abstract designs with a visual emotional significance that illuminated, with their weird

contortions of line and form, the weird soul-contortions of the scheming hypnotist. The art force of this harmony between setting and play was compelling beyond belief and, as an accomplishment, was far beyond anything the writer had ever seen, or heard of, on the screen. Enthusiastic reports of it first came from Paris, where war hates were forgotten (two years after the armistice) by crowds that stood in line to buy tickets. Then there was excitement here among artists and others who went to see it two and three times and called it the first work of visual art in the movies. Then came reports of not pulling a crowd in San Francisco, of not paying in Chicago, of being suppressed in this and that city by the American Legion because it was German, of no special interest shown here, no press comments there. Such was America's vote. To an insider at Hollywood was put the question, "Will Caligari have any effect on American production?" And with the usual cynical smile came the answer, "They've been watching it, all right, and with interest. They know its quality—and that it *lost money.* No,

it won't have any influence on American production."

Pictorially the motion picture of to-day is straight representation. It, therefore, calls forth in the observer only practical vision—does not go beyond ordinary daily visual experience. Though there have been a few outstanding productions in this country in which there has been art in the acting, there have been none, so far as the writer has been able to learn, among commercial productions at least, that have made use of visual art in the setting. And, as the public is eminently satisfied with this situation, no change in policy in commercial productions is in sight.[1]

The answer, then, of those who would like to see visual as well as dramatic art in the movie, must be to carry over the revolt of the little

[1] This should be qualified by the admission that there have been commercial productions that made use of many of the good qualities of representative art, such as composition, tone harmony, centralized interest, etc. "The Covered Wagon" and Coogan's "Oliver Twist" are examples. See Victor O. Freeburg's "Pictorial Beauty on the Screen" for an able presentment of what has, and can yet be done in this direction. The above plea is for creative visual design in settings.

theater movement from the speaking to the silent stage. Caligari is said to have cost but $7000.00 to produce. Small independent producers with an ideal beyond profit could finance such an investment. Independent little theaters in clubs, schools, museums, neighborhood centers, etc., could present regular programs using the best films already in existence and engaging such independent productions as would surely spring into being once such a movement gained headway. Here again is a logical opportunity for the women's clubs and other educational agencies to take coördinated action to help break the throttle-hold of commercialism on our cultural life, and give a constructive program in its stead. The intellectual educational possibilities of the screen are already widely recognized and made use of; its possibilities in the field of education in visual art have not yet been touched.

Charles Chaplin, in an article "Does the Public Know What it Wants," in the *Ladies Home Journal* for October, 1923, refers to Caligari in these words:

"And therefore we all argue about what 'they'

want—'they,' of course, meaning the paying public. But this has created a situation which I firmly believe stultifies imagination and is a barrier to originality. When 'The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari' proved a failure, although an artistic success unquestionably, our wiseacres jumped to the conclusion that the public did not want originality. Certainly Caligari was original, and surely it failed, but the truth of this does not mean that the public, although it may never like Caligari in any guise, is lined up in solid ranks to protest against originality."

Note the finality with which he applies the word "failure" merely because the play did not pay, when, in the same sentence, he admits artistic success. Throughout the entire article there is the same unquestioning acceptance of financial success as the only goal of the producer. The discussion is concerned with the means of pleasing the public with novel and original ventures and thereby succeeding without following tradition in set grooves. Not once does he give any indication that he has even a secret

dream of someday producing the best work of art of which he is capable regardless of "success," and then, in the event of initial "failure," of presenting it under an endowment so the public may have the opportunity of seeing something better than it has ever seen before, or than it can appreciate at the moment—and of thus improving its standard of taste.

Later in the same article he says:

"I do not know what constitutes the so-called art picture. Very often around film studios it has meant something that the producer and the initiated like, but that they fear is too good for the public. Often it is a tragedy or a picture with a tragic ending. Now there can be just as inartistic tragedies—in spite of their accumulation of woe and grief—as comedies, and the unhappy ending, which is so often in plays, stories, and pictures, misconstrued for artistry, can be worse than a custard pie. Usually the unhappy ending in films is inartistic because it is jumped at and arrived at through false scenes."

We have, perhaps, learned in this book, if we did not know it before, that subject is merely

the material from which a work of art is built. Any pictorial subject-matter may be transformed into a work of art. So also may any dramatic subject-matter, whether tragedy or comedy, be transformed—by an artist. Charles Chaplin has the reputation, and it is evidently deserved, of being one of the few artists in the "Movies." An artist, by the very definition of his high profession, is a leader of taste—an establisher of spiritual values. He cannot be these things and compromise with the public demand. When a pictorial artist so compromises, he is labelled commercial. When a screen artist so compromises he surely earns the same title. Is Chaplin really satisfied with the accomplishment indicated by his words when he has the greater one within his reach—the one which would give him an enduring place in history as an establisher of higher values in his profession? From the commercial producer there is no hope. From the artist producer there should be. Perhaps some day the much loved Charlie will forget his public entirely and produce a work of real art—and take the loss, if there is one, as a matter of minor

importance, as artists in the visual and other fields are always taking it. And he will do it from choice, selfishly, as they do, because he will *get more* from such a course than he can from only taking the money.

But there is another angle to the matter which is even harder on the producers than the foregoing prescription of altruism, and leaves them not one rag of excuse for their present program. That is that the work of art can be, and often is, a "success." Caligari failed more because of its nerve-racking story than because of its art quality. The artists who were thrilled by it thought of the story as a means to an end, whereas the public, unconscious of the art, thought only of the story and was frightened away. When a comedy, for instance, is a work of art, it wins everybody in sight—the ignorant who perceive only the comedy, the "high-brow" who attends only to the art, and a middle class who enjoy both. There are examples enough on the speaking stage, and we who are a bit discriminating crave this whole-hearted surrender to fun and art. We want to find it in the "movie" as a

quick and convenient release from ourselves and our work. To impose art on comedy, or tragedy, or a popular story with human situations, is a way to success. History proves it. And the sets need not be cubist abstractions, as in Caligari. There are a thousand ways of creating emotional illusion with form, space, and color without offending the layman. Why do the producers fail to "succeed" in this direction?

ART AND ADVERTISING

American pictorial advertising is a barometer of prevailing standards in pictures. The following table tells the story by recording an analysis of all pictorial "ads" in six chance copies of current popular magazines.

PICTORIAL ART IN MAGAZINE ADS

Magazines	Ads that were works of art as herein defined.	Ads showing touch of representative artists and having some art quality.	Ads with no touch of art quality.	Total ads counted.
Saturday Evening Post	0	1	80	81
Ladies Home Journal	2	8	268	278
Woman's Home Comp.	0	5	138	143
Good Housekeeping	0	4	263	267
Asia	0	4	29	33
Butterick Quarterly	0	0	26	26
Totals	2	22	804	828

Appendix

No comment is necessary unless, perhaps, to emphasize the outstanding indication of the American business man's apparent ignorance of the distinction inherent in the contribution of the artist to a picture, or an "ad," or whatever he touches creatively. When one considers that a great number of advertisements aim to give their wares distinction in the mind of the prospective buyer, their failure to employ the most potent known means to that end is indeed surprising, and can only be explained as resulting from the prevailing broken contact between artist and public.

During two months of observation of street-car, subway, elevated, billboard and store advertisements in the city of New York, thousands of cheap glaring crudities were seen daily, and, in the entire time, just one lone, solitary example of a group of display "ads" that were the work of an artist. See fig. 78.

Germany, Switzerland, and to some extent France, make constant use of ads that are works of art. America will probably do so in time.

FIG. 78

The only example of a display "ad" that was the work of an artist found during two months of observation in New York City. One of a series of Hale posters for Saks & Co. Compare this with any one of the thousands of familiar realistic "ads" and see which has the greater advertising force and distinction. If this wins in these respects it should follow that its superior quality will gradually be recognized and the entire field of pictorial advertising be gradually revolutionized.

THE ARTIST AND THE PUBLIC

That there is to-day an almost bottomless chasm existing between true artists and the general public, particularly in English-speaking countries, is a truism that the artist can never forget, and that the layman notices occasionally when he is shocked, or annoyed, or provoked to mirth, by the aloofness, or "grouchiness" of the members of this queer profession. The chasm is made up of the layman's indifference, ignorance and misunderstanding toward the artist, and the latter's resentment at the resulting lack of respect for himself, and lack of *real* interest in his own, and all works of art.

The causes of this unfortunate situation need not be gone into here except, perhaps, to indicate the source of the trouble as lying in the recent degradation of art to the materialistic function of imitation, and the resulting rather-to-be-expected appraisal of all art by this low but

familiar standard. Blame for the degrading can by no means be placed carelessly on either group alone and certainly not on the public alone; for artists, as a class, have had a first-hand part in the pulling down process, and are therefore, if anything, more to blame. No, blame must be shared by artists and public alike, or else placed squarely on the state of mind which has produced the most materialistic civilization in the world's history. But blame and causes are both backward-looking. Results and futures are more to our point.

That there is need of coöperation between artist and public is indicated by all of human history. The public needs it as an escape from materialism, for the release from self made possible by spiritual adventure, for the joy in life to be found in this release, and, for the healing joy of experiencing pure sensation which accompanies it. Increased capacity for the enjoyment of natural beauty is an additional side-issue perquisite to be gained from the larger experiences mentioned, as is also the keener visual sensitiveness to the visual quality of

environment, such as gowns, room decoration, house or wall-paper designs, etc. The artist needs the coöperation for the stimulation resulting from a sensitive response to his work, because it fulfills his inherent human need to serve, and because from it comes the material means of living and working. When the coöperation is present the relation is normal and fruitful in both directions. Both sides give and both receive.

The present situation of divorce between the two thwarts all these mutual needs and the results are abnormal, disease-breeding and wasteful to a dangerous degree. As it works on the public, the loss of this esthetic emotional outlet turns the individual back into his material self and his material activities. Some consciousness of the futility of physical comings and goings and thinkings must be in all of us, for widespread boredom is a sign of the times, and the usual frenzied hurry—the ever present urge to *go* somewhere and *do* something, instead of quietly to pause and see, hear, or feel, can only be the result of a blind desire to fill in the void

—*to kill time* (pathetic expression). Religion fulfills a similar emotional need to that fulfilled by art, and highly religious people find in it a substitute for art. Those that are cut off from both safety outlets are ships without ballast rolling fitfully in the storm of life—even welcoming the excitement of war and killing for the chance they offer of an escape from the deadly monotony of physical self.

On the artist the results of the divorce are probably as devastating as is possible from any human disaster. The condition immediately divides all artists whose development is above that of their public into two classes, those who compromise with the public taste in order to get money, and those who do not so compromise. The former again divide into two classes—those who hate themselves for their prostitution of their higher abilities, probably carrying this hate over against society, and those who accept the situation with a cynical laugh, abdicate the function (though not the title) of artist, and proceed to give the public what it wants and take the money—the price of selling their souls. The

entire class of the sellers-out is tragically large to-day and, of course, highly honored and rewarded by those among the public and the art officials whom it pleases. Yet let us be slow to blame. One must live—and support a family. But the great waste of it all! The perverted abilities! The withered, starved, or still-born possibilities! The bitterness, the hate, the disgust, the hollow sham, the falsehood, the cynicism!

The artist who does not sell out and yet has to earn a living—let us pass him by. Analysis here cuts too deep into quivering flesh. Read the biographies of the creators of the race. It has always been thus, of course, only never before as it seems, has the chasm been quite so deep as during the last hundred years.

The artist whose plane of development is the same as that of his public has the most placid life of all artists, and, if placidity is the goal, is the most to be envied. He goes his way peacefully without question or conflict. He is understood and appreciated and honored and his work is purchased. He lives in ease and comfort and

can afford to have a family, and a new car every two years. He is popular at the club, at church and at dinner. No repressions—no aloofness. Yes, he is most to be envied—if placidity is the goal.

Nothing new has been said in this scratching of the surface of artist and public relations. Everyone knows the conditions. Commercial age. Industrial democracy. There is nothing to be done. The tide is too strong. Yes, but does every individual know just how much he gains and loses from this situation? There is food for thought here. Even if no general change can occur, individual change is possible. That is the main point.

How can the change be made in an individual case? How can the coöperation of the ages be reëstablished? There is an answer to that which may not solve the entire question but certainly is a starting point toward the solution. That answer is:

Appendix

BUYING POWER

Buying power works for good in two directions by automatically reëstablishing coöperation. Just as the purchase of mediocrity stimulates the production of mediocrity, so the purchase of works of art at least allows works of art to be produced. An individual program might be this: In every field where art touches life such as the fields of pictures, sculptures, textile and costume design, lamp shades, iron ornaments, jewelry, etc., stop buying mediocrities, demand works of art—the productions of creative artists. Whether the artist work through the machine, in the case of industrial products, or direct in original creations, demand, through purchase, that he, not the average layman, be the arbiter of taste. Such an act does as much as one person can do to force commercialism to raise its standards, and supplies the food and drink that makes possible more production. And such action reacts on the buyer. Association with works of art breeds understanding of art and desire for it. The keen, sure means to familiarity

is through the sacrifice entailed by ownership. Buy works of art—the best according to your present judgment. Buy them even if they may later prove to be only half good. Successive purchases will increasingly gain better and better works. Knowledge grows with the thought and interest essential to selection. Buy works of art in every department of sensation. It is the sure way to spiritual adventure.

Lest he be accused of prejudice in giving such advice, because he belongs to the camp of the artists, the writer submits that he is also a buyer of art and knows whereof he speaks, and what he has gained from the buying experience. On one occasion when his total worldly cash capital amounted to one hundred dollars, he "foolishly" spent sixty-five of these dollars for works of art, and then had to travel nine hundred miles in his car and live for one month in a strange city on the balance with no accessions of wealth, without selling his purchases and, needless to say, without regret. The food he didn't eat during that month would only have given momentary satisfaction whereas the works of art have already contributed three years of unfailing satisfaction.

He knows of many similar cases—the two girls on a hundred dollar a month income who bought an eighty dollar book of color reproductions of early Chinese paintings—the print collector who cut down his daily lunch bill from the usual seventy-five cents to thirty-five cents and put the balance into his print fund until he had gathered some fifteen originals of high merit which were later invited by his local museum for exhibition—the rich widow who dispensed with servants, automobile, and all such expensive physical luxuries, and lived in a small cottage spending her income of some thousand dollars a month on works of art for

herself and to be given to her town library museum—the two country school teachers buying original prints with five dollar per month installments, etc., etc. It is not sacrifice to do these things though it is so labeled. The real sacrifice lies in not doing them and thereby earning the wages of boredom. Only some people have never found it out.

CONCLUSION

THE purpose of this book resolves itself into two main functions, an explanation of a method of seeing all pictures, which method is built on a universal standard, and the presentation of evidence to show that sensitive individual judgments built on such a standard are sorely needed in everyday life.

To an individual equipped with this ability to judge, a new and entirely different set of experiences from those he can know without it, is bound to come during the ordinary course of events. For instance:

He will visit an exhibition of paintings. Instead of experiencing muddled confusion, he will observe keenly and let himself enter into the spirit of different works with the will to see and feel the best they have to offer and to give full credit to that best, but not to overestimate it or give more appreciation than is deserved. In

one painting he will see superb craftsmanship and give it credit, then look for the contribution of the artist. If the picture rivals the color photograph he will find none, or almost none. The more creative it is, the more it shows design organization of all the elements, the more of the felt nature he senses in it, the more is its art power. He can test it mentally and emotionally, watching the type of his reactions and being conscious of their derivation. Visiting an exhibition will become, under these circumstances, a real event. Tea and talk may cease (for him) to be the main attraction to a display of works of art.

After the exhibition he will drop in at an art dealer's gallery. From the window display he will know the type of dealer before entering, whether he is entirely commercial, semi-commercial, or educational. A glance around the walls will tell him the type of pictures displayed. If there are no works of art in sight, a question will discover whether or not they are stored in drawers waiting to be shown to the rare, above-the-average buyer. And when such

are brought out they will be recognized for what they are—imitative, academic, suggestively representative, creative. If the shop specializes in significant work, the dealer will readily respond to even a hesitating interest, and will bring out his treasures, and forget salesmanship in his real enthusiasm for them. And, if a purchase is made to add to the home collection, the buyer will thank the dealer and make him promise to let him know when more examples of So-and-so's new style arrive.

In the evening at home the new purchase will be examined and criticized by the family, and the So-and-so's, who also have an example of this artist's work, will be called over to see his latest —and to learn incidentally, during the talk, that their example, bought four years ago, has increased in price. The children will know all about the artist for an exhibition of his work visited the school last month and they wrote essays, and are clipping reproductions for their scrap-books, and the class bought one of his pictures for the permanent collection in assembly hall.

Then Mrs. So-and-so will laughingly tell of her decorator's advice about installing French prints in the new east room and her ensuing argument with that authority on the question of contemporary originals. And mother will report her altercation with the head buyer of Smith's furnishings department about crétonnes —how he tried to tell her that their re-hashes of French rococo and Chinese mandarin were "the most popular this year," and how she insisted on seeing new creative designs by American artists, and when he said he had none, how she had said, Very well, she would wait to buy till he got some in. And then the talk will turn to the latest decision of the Art Commission and the pressure the Club is bringing to bear on the officials to force them to buy a better design than the one they favor, and to the Parent-Teacher Association's program for bringing better "movies" to town, etc., etc., etc.

Dreams, dreams, dreams. Yes, but sometimes dreams come true—which is the only excuse for so much concern with them. Art touches life in a thousand places every day. There are no

limits to the possibilities of using it. The key is discrimination. You, friend Reader, are judge, jury and court of appeals. The decision is yours. You have the right, and the privilege, and the opportunity to do—exactly as you wish.

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